THE SEA KINGS

A Pirate Movie
by
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New York, New York 10017
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FADE IN ON

An 18th century sailing ship that we are looking at through a telescope. Blue water all around; it's dusk. We follow the telescope as it moves slowly along the length of the sailing ship, and there's one thing that must be mentioned as being more than a little strange: the ship we're examining seems totally deserted. Nothing stirs on board. Now --

CUT TO

THE MAN HOLDING THE TELESCOPE. HE'S A TOUGH SEA CAPTAIN, and he's standing with some other seamen on the quarterdeck of his own ship, a large trading vessel running low in the water; in other words, it's loaded with cargo. A BIG NAVIGATOR moves alongside the TOUGH CAPTAIN. (When they speak, it is with what we now consider a southern accent. According to no less an historian than Boorstin, everybody in America at this time -- it's 1717 -- spoke with a southern accent.)

BIG NAVIGATOR
(He's more than a little worried)
It might have been plague sir -- sudden plague could have taken them all.

TOUGH CAPTAIN
(Not remotely perturbed; he shakes his head)
Pirates.
(THE BIG NAVIGATOR turns to him)
Dusk is their favorite time.
(He looks across at the deserted ship, not more than a hundred yards away)
Have you readied the cannons?

BIG NAVIGATOR
As you ordered.
(And as he gestures --

CUT TO

A DOZEN CANNONS, ALL OF THEM MANNED AND READY. But there is undeniably a sense of anxiety. These are experienced sailors, but they've never fought an empty ship before.

CUT TO

THE EMPTY SHIP. All very eerie. The wind seems to be picking up, the sound more noticable.

CUT TO

THE QUARTERDECK. THE TOUGH CAPTAIN IS AS UNRUFFLED AS EVER, THE BIG NAVIGATOR on the other hand, is getting pretty panicky as time goes on and the two ships imperceptibly come closer.

BIG NAVIGATOR
It would be a simple matter for us to alter course, sir.

TOUGH CAPTAIN
(Like nails)
I -- don't -- alter -- course.

BIG NAVIGATOR
Why do you think they're doing this?

TOUGH CAPTAIN
They're trying to make us nervous, I expect.

BIG NAVIGATOR
The fools.
(And he whirls toward the cannons)
Get ready --
(Only he cuts himself off, whirls toward the deserted ship as we --

CUT TO

THE DESERTED SHIP and the wind is still rising, but now another sound is coming along with it -- a great-animal-like roar and

CUT TO

THE QUARTERDECK and now, except for the TOUGH CAPTAIN, the panic is starting to spread.

BIG NAVIGATOR
What is that?

TOUGH CAPTAIN
(Impatient)
Nothing -- nothing at all --
(And now he stops, listening, as words come booming from the empty ship)

GIANT VOICE (OVER)
...death or surrender...surrender or die... The Devil bids you choose...

TOUGH CAPTAIN
(Shouting to his sailors who are not too happy)
That is not the Devil, but only a man with some device to amplify his voice --
(Louder)
-- prepare to fire on command. Ready --
(Now, suddenly --

CUT TO

THE BIG NAVIGATOR, pointing, wild --

BIG NAVIGATOR
-- what is that? -- WHAT? -- IS -- IT? --

CUT TO

THE TOUGH CAPTAIN and this is really a shocker because he doesn't look tough anymore, just suddenly ashen and panicked and as he stares --

CUT TO

THE DESERTED SHIP, only it's not deserted now, because A LARGE FIGURE has just appeared in the semi-darkness, and this is him, this is the pirate we've all seen in our imaginations, the man who the greatest writer on piracy ever described as being a figure who frightened America more than any comet and

CUT TO

THE TOUGH CAPTAIN ON HIS QUARTERDECK.

TOUGH CAPTAIN
(Whispered -- to the BIG NAVIGATOR)
...run up the white flag...
(Beat)
...it's Blackbeard...
(And on that name --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, standing in the glowing darkness and as the trading ship raises the white flag of surrender, he raises his arms and releases a wild cry of triumph and --

-- and FREEZE.

Because this was really a remarkable creature, and it's important that we have an understanding of why his legend grew.

In the first place, he was phenomenally strong, capable of enduring practically anything. And maybe no one in history consumed more rum than Blackbeard. A prodigious drinker.

He was also no dummy. He sensed that the golden days of piracy were winding down, and it drove him constantly, to somehow try to get out alive and rich while it was still possible. And although he didn't invent psychological warfare, he certainly understood it and its uses. That is made totally clear in the way he prepared for battle--no one ever, before or since, used physical appearance the way he did.

You have to begin with the beard. It grew long and he left it untrimmed, and it came high on his face, to not far below his eyes. And before battle, he would braid it, and tie little ribbons in it. And some of the longer braids he would throw over his shoulders. Then he would take a bandoleer and place it across his shoulders and in it he had six loaded pistols. Not to mention a wide belt, with additional pistols and knives.

And his cutlass was probably the largest ever used -- some say it weighed ten pounds, and only a man with his power could have swung the thing. And he wore that at his waist too.

But the final touch was what most made him seem supernatural. He would take long match-like pieces of rope, slow burning, and he tucked them under his hat. He liked dusk for then, just before battle, he would light these slow burning ropes and stand ready for battle, armed like something out of Homer, these flames near his face, flickering across his dark eyes, wispy curls of smoke circling his head.

No one ever much wanted to go into action against him. Cowards went to pieces, brave men simply folded up in silence.

He was, all in all, something to behold. And from beholding him, as we have been for awhile, slowly --

FADE OUT.

FADE IN ON

MAJOR STEDE BONNET IN CLOSE UP. This man is our other legend, or rather, is soon to become one. Right now, although he is

about the same age as BLACKBEARD, the impression he gives could not be more opposite. BONNET is well bred, terribly appealing, totally unfrightening.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BONNET, duelling with a small loaf of bread. The bread is on a tea tray, the tea tray is on a table, set in the shade close by a wooden building that is square, one story, cabin-like in feel, not at all imposing.

BONNET
(The point of his slender rapier at the center of the bread)
Prepare to breathe your last.

And now he begins to fence around the table, his weapon flashing, as if the bread were a deadly enemy. It is totally impossible to tell at this point if BONNET is much good with a sword or not, but this should be clear -- he's serious at what he's doing. After a moment, he stops as his name is called.

VOICE (OVER)
Major Bonnet -- Major? --

BONNET moves around to the side of the building, looks off and waves, calling --

BONNET
Take your time, Mr. Walpole.
(On that --

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE hurrying toward BONNET. He carries a thin, rectangular object that is covered with a cloth. MR. WALPOLE is BONNET'S chief servant, and has been for years. He is devoted and BONNET relies greatly on him in return. MR. WALPOLE is 50, big, and American. He speaks with the same southern type accent as the TOUGH CAPTAIN in the earlier sequence at sea.

Obviously, we're not at sea now. We're in Barbados, on BONNET'S plantation. The island is a dazzling deep green and BONNET was the richest man on it, his plantation the largest. The small building -- BONNET'S RETREAT -- is located on a distant secluded corner of the property.

It all looks sunny, and, for 1717 at least, pretty impressive.

MR. WALPOLE
The painter just dropped this by -- I knew you'd want it.

CUT TO

BONNET, excited, nodding as MR. WALPOLE approaches.

BONNET
Mrs. Bonnet didn't notice?

MR. WALPOLE
No sir; she was abusing some of her maids, she seemed quite occupied.

BONNET
(Indicating the package MR. WALPOLE carries)
And the painter swore it was accurate?

MR. WALPOLE
(Close now, he slows)
In all ways.

CUT TO

THE DOOR TO THE RETREAT -- there are locks and other devices to insure its privacy. Right now, the door is open and as BONNET enters --

CUT TO

INSIDE THE RETREAT, as BONNET quickly takes the package, nervously fusses with the strings that keep the cloth over it, finally rips them free.

BONNET
Now I have them all, my four titans --
(As he gestures around the room --

CUT TO

THE WALLS. ON THREE THERE ARE PORTRAITS. As the CAMERA moves from one face to the next, BONNET says their names --

BONNET (OVER)
(We see the first painting)
Drake --
(The second)
-- Morgon --
(Now the third)
-- Captain Kidd --

CUT TO

BONNET, as he stares at the painting in his hands. (We haven't seen it yet.) He is obviously terribly pleased and proud.

BONNET
Just as I always imagined he would be.
(MR. WALPOLE nods in total agreement)
The sea king himself.
(And as he hangs the painting on the wall --

CUT TO

THE PAINTING, AND IT'S BLACKBEARD, of course, but here's the thing -- it doesn't look remotely like him. It's a glamourized version, like the famous Howard Pyrle paintings or a still picture from an Errol Flynn movie. This Blackbeard wears a lace billowing sleeved impossibly clean silk shirt, and pants that look like they came straight from the cleaners, and boots that glisten.

CUT TO

BONNET staring at the painting, then taking a step forward, reaching out, touching the canvas is if it were real. Because for BONNET, it was. He always believed the romance about piracy; reality never interested him.

Now, as he steps back, slowly stiffens and begins to salute the painting --

CUT TO

THE FLOWER GARDEN BEHIND BONNET'S MANSION. It is large and well tended and wild with color. MRS. BONNET, her back to us is clipping flowers, We cannot tell what she looks like yet.

CUT TO

BONNET, expensively dressed, followed by MR. WALPOLE moving out of BONNET'S mansion -- the most impressive on the island -- into the flower garden area. When they get close, BONNET raises a hand, MR. WALPOLE stops, remains waiting while BONNET moves toward his wife.

BONNET
Beloved, Mr. Walpole is driving me to Bridgetown but I'll be back by dinnertime.

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET, still working, her back to him. Perhaps she hasn't heard.

CUT TO

BONNET, he takes a step forward, speaks more loudly.

BONNET
Darling?

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET. We still can't see her face. She works at clipping flowers, putting them into a large basket she carries in her left hand.

CUT TO

BONNET.

BONNET
(Loudest yet)
Precious one? Kiss me goodbye?

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET, slowly turning, and she is just adorable. Middle to late 30's, she appears younger. Her figure is lovely, her face the kind that lights up rooms. She appears totally and completely friendly, kind and winning.

MRS. BONNET
You know I have a weak stomach.

CUT TO

BONNET AND HIS WIFE. He tries very hard when around her to maintain composure, but he doesn't always succeed.

BONNET
There's no need to insult me
this early in the morning.

MRS. BONNET
There's every need to insult you
-- what other pleasures to I have
left to me?

BONNET
This silly exaggerating of yours --

MRS. BONNET
(Cutting in)
---exaggerating? I go to sleep at

MRS. BONNET (CONT)
night dreaming of ways to enrage you. Tomorrow I think I'll ignore you completely -- I know how that drives you mad.

CUT TO

BONNET, and she's starting to get to him now. Still, as calmly as he can manage --

BONNET
I cannot fathom why you hate me so, since I have given you everything you've ever asked for --

MRS. BONNET
-- children? --

BONNET
-- but you despise children --

MRS. BONNET
-- that's beside the point --

BONNET
(Loud now)
-- even if it were, how can you expect me to sire anything when you haven't let me into your bedroom since practically the turn of the century.

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET, half turning back to her flowers:

MRS. BONNET
I still remember your touch -- your sweaty hands --

CUT TO

BONNET, moving toward her.

BONNET
I was nervous, we were young, I was dumbstruck by your beauty --

MRS. BONNET
(Nods)
I have that effect on people. Leave now or I'll expire of boredom.

BONNET
(Takes a step away, stops)
Sarah?
(She looks at him)
Why in the world did you marry me?

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET. CLOSE UP.

MRS. BONNET
Because I hated Virginia, because you were rich and I was silly --
(Beat)
-- and because, in your Army uniform, I thought you would someday be a hero.

CUT TO

BONNET. She has her back to him again, working at her flowers. He starts to leave her.

BONNET
(As he goes)
Until dinner then.

MRS. BONNET
(Calling after him)
We're having fish.

BONNET
You know I cannot abide fish.

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET, turning.

MRS. BONNET
Of course.

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, who has been near enough to have heard what has been said. BONNET approaches him, pauses.

BONNET
(Watching his wife)
She seemed in a better mood than usual, didn't you think?

MR. WALPOLE
(Nods)
Almost cheery.

CUT TO

BONNET AND MR. WALPOLE as they slowly move away from the garden toward a waiting open coach.

BONNET
I was told recently that in Central France there lives a woman even more horrid than my wife.

MR. WALPOLE
Do you think it's possible?

BONNET
God moves in mysterious ways...
(As they move on --

CUT TO

A NAVAL ARCHITECT'S OFFICE, in Bridgetown, the main village of the island. There are various crude drawings and architect's sketches tacked around, a few ship models here and there.

THE ARCHITECT, MR. TULLEY, old and with rimless glasses sits happily at his desk. The reason for his happiness is easily seen: BONNET is counting out an enormous sum of money.

MR. TULLEY
It was a glorious day for me when you decided to go into inter-island trading, Major.
(BONNET grunts, continues silently counting money)
Your ship is my greatest achievement.

BONNET
For what it's costing, it should be.

MR. TULLEY
I do wish you'd come and see it ---

BONNET
(Cutting him off)
-- I told you when I commissioned it -- I will see nothing until completion. I want it all to wash over me as a glorious surprise..

CUT TO

A LARGE PENCIL DRAWING OF A SHIP IN PROFILE TACKED TO A WALL.

(When we see BONNET'S SHIP, it will be exactly like the drawing.) TULLEY goes to it and points to a spot on the Hull.

MR. TULLEY
We would like to paint the name on if you've decided. If you haven't, may I suggest something delicate and graceful. Perhaps The Flying Cloud. Or, if you like, Sea Swan. Or --

BONNET
(Sharply)
The Revenge!

TULLEY
(Surprised)
Seems a trifle aggressive for a trading ship.

BONNET
(Nods)
Yes, doesn't it.
(And now he begins putting more money down)

TULLEY
Major, you've more than paid in full.

BONNET
This is for cannons.

CUT TO

TULLEY shrugs, nods.

TULLEY
A cannon? Certainly, if you want one --

CUT TO

BONNET. CLOSE UP.

BONNET
Ten, Mr. Tulley. Ten cannons.

CUT TO

TULLEY. And this request really shocks him. Now, from his very stunned face --

CUT TO

A BREATHTAKING VIEW OF THE CARIBBEAN AND BONNET being driven home by MR. WALPOLE. The carriage is open, the sun streams down. The road is rough, but close to the water, which glistens blue green in the afternoon light.

CUT TO

THE TWO OF THEM IN THE CARRIAGE. BONNET is bursting with something.

BONNET
Mr. Walpole, I must tell someone --
(MR. WALPOLE nods)
-- I am going to make an alteration in my life -- I have decided to stop being the richest man for five hundred miles and intend to take up piracy.
(On the word 'piracy' --

ZOOM TO

MR. WALPOLE as he pulls the reins of the horse and they come to a very sharp stop.

MR. WALPOLE
(Slowly turning to face BONNET; trying for calm)
Beg pardon, sir?

CUT TO

BONNET, wild with enthusiasm, vaulting to the groudd.

BONNET
You-heard-me, you-heard-me --
(He executes a few fencing moves)
-- I am on fire with the notion.
(He glances at MR. WALPOLE who is not exactly jumping up and down)
You have qualms?

MR. WALPOLE
(Head shake)
Just confused is all, since you've always hated water and get seasick at every opportunity.

BONNET
I'll have to work on that.

MR. WALPOLE
I will, of course, miss you, but --

BONNET
-- miss me? -- Jesus Christ, man, you're coming along.

MR. WALPOLE
But Major --

BONNET
-- you've got to -- someone's going to have to hire a pirate crew and you can't expect a man of my social position to go into dingy waterfront taverns.

MR. WALPOLE
(Nothing ruffles him)
Has it occurred to the Major that once you've officially become a known pirate your social position is apt to sag slightly anyway?

BONNET
I'll need seventy men -- I want only the best cutthroats and I'm willing to pay whatever it costs.

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE. He sighs, finally nods.

MR. WALPOLE
But you must tell me why.

CUT TO

BONNET. He hesitates, then talks, but in a reverie now, voice quiet and somehow sad.

BONNET
When I was deliriously ill with the coughing sickness this winter past, I dreamt I died and was watching my own funeral. Not a tear from a soul -- until suddenly, a strange child -- perhaps ten, was weeping and saying 'you failed me, you failed me,' and then I recognized the child.

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, listening entranced as BONNET goes on.

BONNET
It was myself when ten, Mr. Walpole. Crying to the dead man I'd become. And in the dream the child say, 'All I ever wanted was adventure, how could you have failed me so terribly?'

CUT TO

BONNET, almost moved by the memory now.

BONNET
That was all I ever wanted as a child...
(Beat)
...and it still holds true...and I have failed.
(Beat)
But not any more. I ordered the ship built as soon as I began recovery because, I swear this --
(Tears begin; he blinks them back)
-- I will know adventure before I die.
(Long pause)
Even if it kills me...
(HOLD ON BONNET. KEEP HOLDING. Then --

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET with a pistol in her hands -- she is near to hysteria as we

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BONNET, finishing packing as she points the pistol dead at him. His bedroom is enormous and elegant. Outside, it's night.

MRS. BONNET
One more step and you die!

BONNET
(Going right on with his packing)
Even for you, that's a bit melodramatic.

MRS. BONNET
You may not go. May not!

BONNET
I'm running late as it is --
I dare not miss the tide.

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET, turning the gun on herself.

MRS. BONNET
All right then -- one more step
and I die.

BONNET
(Not even pausing)
And muss your powder? Not likely.

MRS. BONNET
(Puts the pistol down)
But no man has ever left me.
(Really upset)
What will I do here alone? Who
will there be for me to torment
with you gone?

BONNET
You should have developed other
hobbies; it's not my fault.

MRS. BONNET
Everything is your fault --
that is the motto I live by.

CUT TO

BONNET, closing his largest case, calling out.

BONNET
Mr. Walpole.

CUT TO

THE DOOR OPENING AND MR. WALPOLE, leading a bunch of other servants, hurries into the room. THE SERVANTS grab up the luggage, scurry immediately out.

MR. WALPOLE
Everything is in readiness,
Major.

BONNET
A moment, please.
(MR. WALPOLE exits and

CUT TO

BONNET and his wife, alone.

MRS. BONNET
There must be a secret to this somewhere -- that I know --

BONNET
-- there is simply money to be made, transporting goods from island to island. Many other planters are doing the same --

MRS. BONNET
(Not paying attention)
-- it couldn't be another woman -- no other woman would have you.

BONNET
Store up your venom for my return, why don't you; think of the fun you'll have -- fish for breakfast, taunts for lunch --

MRS. BONNET
-- what else, what other secret? --

BONNET
-- madam, this is goodbye, I could die at sea, won't you at least acknowledge my leaving?

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET, thinking hard in a world of her own, moving to a window, staring out at the moonlit water beyond.

CUT TO

BONNET, watches her a moment more. She is simply lovely. To look at. He shakes his head, turns and goes, closing the door behind him.

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET. CLOSE UP, as the sound of the door comes.

MRS. BONNET
...could it be my fault he's leaving...?
(Thinks a moment, shakes her head)

MRS. BONNET (CONT)
...impossible...
(Now from her
beautiful face --

ZOOM TO

A PIRATE'S FACE IN CLOSE UP -- scary as hell -- he's the first one we've seen and he has a glass eye and scars all over his forehead and ---

GLASS EYE
-- move me.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

MR. WALPOLE HANDING A PIECE OF BONNET'S LUGGAGE TO GLASS EYE. We're on the waterfront at Bridgetown and the moonlight is very strong.

MR. WALPOLE
-- this is his last piece -- he's coming --

GLASS EYE
(Grabbing it --
it's heavy)
-- gimme a hand goddamit --
(As he and MR. WALPOLE
take the trunk --

CUT TO

BONNET, moving along in the dark waterfront, and now as he turns a corner he just stops dead and gasps as we suddenly

CUT TO

THE REVENGE and it's beautiful. Back lit by moonlight, it lies at anchor and this is the first time we've been really close to one of these glorious sailing ships. (In the opening sequence, we were either looking at BLACKBEARD'S ship through a telescope or we were close in on the quarterdeck of the other ship so this should be the first real impact of what it was like. Of course, even here, we won't see everything, not as it's going to look in daylight. That comes in a page or two.)

But the ship in silhouette is wonderful. The masts rise high, the lines are clean and spare.

CUT TO

BONNET, staring at what he has wrought.

BONNET
(Whispered)
Let me show courage worthy of you -- let me be wild, a daredevil, fearless and famous as Blackbeard --
(Beat)
-- no --
(Another beat)
-- just please, let me not be humiliated. Dear God, I don't want to be a fool...
(HOLD FOR A MOMENT.
Then --

CUT TO

A TINY CRAMPED ROOM. It's daylight, and someone is groaning.

CUT TO

A MISERABLY UNCOMFORTABLE LOOKING BED and BONNET, green, lying on it, holding his stomach. The room is piled high with his luggage, which doesn't leave room for a lot else -- the contrast of this bedroom with the one in his mansion should be considerable.

We are, judging from the view out the porthole, clearly at sea. We are also riding through some terribly rough weather. The room pitches and tilts and each time it does, BONNET'S misery increases. The poor son of a bitch was, at least in the beginning, world class seasick. Now --

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE as he knocks, enters.

MR. WALPOLE
Sir --

BONNET
-- I cannot budge, Mr. Walpole, please don't ask me again. When the ocean quiets, I promise to become a whirlwind of activity.

MR. WALPOLE
The crew has a genuine and growing interest in seeing you, Major -- we have, after all, been at sea a day and a half.

BONNET
Tell them I am working on a master plan for terrorizing the area. Tell them --

MR. WALPOLE
(Suddenly big)
I will tell them nothing.

BONNET
(Startled at MR. WALPOLE'S tone)
But I said --

MR. WALPOLE
(Even louder)
You-will-arise-right-now!

CUT TO

BONNET. Staring at the large man.

BONNET
What is it?

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE. Quietly now.

MR. WALPOLE
Lookout has seen a ship on the horizon. Heading our way.

CUT TO

BONNET. CLOSE UP.

BONNET
You mean we're going into battle?

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE. He nods.

MR. WALPOLE
Soon.

CUT TO

BONNET on the bed. He takes a deep breath, then as he slowly starts to rise --

CUT TO

GLASSEYE, the pirate with the glass eye and the scarred face we saw in darkness. He's standing on the quarterdeck in broad daylight now and the thing is: he looks even tougher now. Big and menacing and

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

A BUNCH OF OTHER PIRATES and what we don't expect is this: GLASSEYE is the handsomest of any of them. I mean, these guys are monsters. (Pirates were, by the way, if they were alive, in very good shape. They needed to be to last in their occupation which was dangerous, exhausting and would have been murder on any insurance company. One in three died on duty. Disease got a lot of others while they were ashore.)

Anyway, these dozen or so men on the quarterdeck are all of them dressed in work clothes; faded, torn and resewn, old, but sturdy, not very clean.

And they are all looking in the same direction as we

CUT TO

THE DOOR TO BONNET'S CABIN opening and just as BONNET begins to emerge --

CUT TO

THE CUTTHROATS ON THE QUARTERDECK and they are, right now, dazed; quickly we find out why as we

CUT TO

BONNET coming on deck for the first time and he is dressed like something out of an Errol Flynn movie -- he looks like the romantic idea of a pirate: billowing silk shirt, spotlessly clean; you name it, he's wearing it and it's new and expensive.

CUT TO

THE CUTTHROATS. This is their captain? A little wave of uncertainty begins to be noticable.

CUT TO

BONNET, addressing his troops --

BONNET
Avast, me hearties --

CUT TO

THE CUTTHROATS. What the hell is he talking about?

CUT TO

BONNET, quickly sizing up the situation --

BONNET
-- listen, everybody --
(That's better;
they nod)
-- I always issue a double order
of rum before combat.

CUT TO

THE CUTTHROATS. That's a lot better. As jugs of rum begin to appear --

CUT TO

BONNET, moving toward MR. WALPOLE who stands in the area of the tiller and the flagpole.

BONNET
(Squinting around,
under his breath)
Point me toward the enemy.
(MR. WALPOLE gestures
surreptitiously and as
BONNET looks in that
direction --

CUT TO

A LARGE SHIP, under full sail, some distance away.

CUT TO

BONNET. Suddenly raising his voice --

BONNET
Topman!
(And now as he looks up --

CUT TO

A GASPING SHOT -- it's the first time we've seen Bonnet's ship in daylight from on high -- the TOPMAN is a lookout maybe a hundred feet in the air -- and we can see the whole thing now, the great sails filled with wind, and the deck far below, and all the pirate activity and below that, the ocean itself, blue and clear but rough as hell -- there are whitecaps and the TOPMAN is weaving with the ship as he clings to his perch.

TOPMAN
(Down to BONNET)
Sir.

BONNET
(A tiny figure by
the tiller)
What nationality?

TOPMAN
(He has a small telescope)
She flies the French flag, captain.

CUT TO

BONNET, whirling on MR. WALPOLE.

BONNET
My flag box.

MR. WALPOLE
Ready, sir.
(And as he hands it over --

CUT TO

THE FLAG BOX as BONNET flips it open -- the thing is full of flags of various sizes and colors, representing all the nationalities that sail anywhere in the vicinity -- Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, Dutch, everything --

CUT TO

BONNET, whipping out a French flag, handing it to MR. WALPOLE.

BONNET
Fly it high.

CUT TO

THE FLAGPOLE with its ropes as MR. WALPOLE begins to get the flag properly set --

BONNET
(Running to the flag,
taking it back --
whispered)
Upside down, Mr. Walpole, it must be upside down.

MR. WALPOLE
Why?

BONNET
To show we're in distress, man.
(As MR. WALPOLE nods --

CUT TO

THE FRENCH FLAG, upside down, flying in the breeze.

CUT TO

THE CAPTAIN'S DECK. There has been, since BONNET'S appearance on deck, constant music, played by a fiddle, a trumpet and a flute. MUSICIANS were important part of a pirate crew. The boredom of waiting days with no quarry in sight were helped enormously by the presence of the musicians.

BONNET
Musicians.

CUT TO

THE THREE OF THEM. They pause in their bouncy playing.

CUT TO

BONNET, instructing them.

BONNET
I don't think we should be so enthusiastic, since we're in distress. Perhaps, at least for awhile, silence might be in order.
(THE MUSICIANS nod and

CUT TO

THE FRENCH SHIP. Much nearer now -- less than half a mile away, steadily approaching through the rough seas and

CUT TO

BONNET AND WALPOLE, watching silently; the tension is very clearly starting to build and

CUT TO

THE PIRATES, moving stealthily, keeping their bodies low and out of sight as much as possible below the eye line of the high solid railings of the ship. (The bulwarks of a pirate ship were always high. Bulwarks, a solid part of a ship's side extending like a fence above the level of the deck -- had openings for the cannons to fire through. But until battle, these were kept shut.)

CUT TO

MORE PIRATES -- up to six per cannon, moving toward their guns, carrying extra powder, cannonballs and the silence and tension increases and

CUT TO

MORE PIRATES, lugging great heavy wooden tubs filled with water and

CUT TO

STILL MORE, carrying blankets and as the wooden water tubs are put down, they place the blankets into the water, soaking them and everything's really getting taut now and

CUT TO

THE FRENCH SHIP, less than a quarter mile away and closing and

CUT TO

BONNET AND MR. WALPOLE.

BONNET
(Whispering)
It is more exciting than the sugar plantation, admit it.

MR. WALPOLE
(Manages a nod)
What's going to happen?

BONNET
These cannons are really only accurate for two hundred yards or so. When they're close, we'll run up the jolly roger and they'll run up the white flag and surrender.
(Beat)
At least that's the theory.

CUT TO

THE DECK, all the pirates crouched in silence by their cannons and

CUT TO

THE FRENCH SHIP, moving on and

CUT TO

BONNET, going into his flag box again and as he reaches for something --

CUT TO

What he's reached for: The black pirate flag with the skull and crossbones, the Jolly Roger itself.

CUT TO

BONNET AND THE JOLLY ROGER. He looks at it a moment, then thrusts it to MR. WALPOLE.

BONNET
Here you go.

MR. WALPOLE
Upside down or rightside up?

BONNET
Either way I'm sure they'll understand.

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, busying himself with the flag and

CUT TO

THE PIRATES watching and

CUT TO

THE MUSICIANS watching and

CUT TO

BONNET, his heart in his mouth as we

CUT TO

THE JOLLY ROGER RISING HIGH INTO THE AIR AND THE MOMENT IT'S VISIBLE --

CUT TO

THE FRENCH SHIP, BLASTING ALL THEIR CANNONS TOWARD BONNET AND

CUT TO

THE WATER as all the French shells fall harmlessly wild and

CUT TO

BONNET, calling out --

BONNET
Hold fire -- hold fire --

CUT TO

THE FRENCH SHIP sending another broadside and

CUT TO

THE WATER, as the cannon balls again fall harmlessly and

CUT TO

BONNET AND MR. WALPOLE.

BONNET
They're very stupid -- it would be blind luck to land from this distance.--

CUT TO

THE FRENCH SHIP, changing direction slightly, going for a better location and

CUT TO

BONNET'S TILLERMAN, GLASSEYE, spinning his tiller madly so that he can nullify the move the French ship is making and

CUT TO

BONNET amazed and stunned as a French shell lands on deck nearby with a tremendous crash and flames immediately break out and

CUT TO

SOME PIRATES BY THE WATER TUBS, grabbing the soaked blankets, running forward and shouting, starting to battle the flames and

CUT TO

BONNET signaling his cannons to open fire because now the noise and smoke and flames on his deck make ordinary speech difficult and

CUT TO

BONNET'S MEN FIRING, and

CUT TO

BONNET'S SHELLS, landing hopelessly short in the water and

CUT TO

THE FRENCH SHIP -- another broadside and

CUT TO

BONNET'S DECK as another French shell lands, more flames begin and

CUT TO

ANOTHER BUNCH OF PIRATES WITH BLANKETS running toward the flames and it's really getting noisy and wild now and

CUT TO

BONNET, MR. WALPOLE trying to keep up, approaching the nearest cannon. It fires, the noise is deafening, the cannon's recoil several feet, almost catching MR. WALPOLE but not quite and BONNET leans down, stares out over the cannon barrel and as he does --

CUT TO

THE VIEW ALONG THE BARREL toward the French ship and because of the roughness of the waves, it's almost impossible to get any kind of proper bead on the target.

CUT TO

BONNET, shouting to the cannon crew --

BONNET
Elevate the damn thing -- six inches --
(As they start to obey --

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, as BONNET whirls on him --

BONNET
You can't get a proper trajectory angle from this level --

MR. WALPOLE
-- that sounds very professional to me --

BONNET
-- well I had to learn <u>something</u> in the Army --

CUT TO

BONNET, and suddenly he is this whirlwind of activity, turning and barking out orders --

BONNET
Glasseye ---

GLASSEYE
(At the tiller)
-- Sir --

BONNET
-- keep to this exact course --

TILLERMAN
-- yessir --

BONNET
(To MR. WALPOLE)
Fire precisely when I say so --

MR. WALPOLE
---it will be done --
(Now --

CUT TO

THE ROPE SHROUDS OF THE SHIP AS BONNET RUNS TO THEM, BEGINS CLIMBING --

BONNET
Precisely, Mr. Walpole --
(MR. WALPOLE nods, watching nervously now as BONNET climbs higher -- he's ten feet off the deck now, looks back --

CUT TO

THE DECK, frenzied activity everywhere --

CUT TO

BONNET -- fifteen feet high now -- hollering with all he's got --

BONNET
Musicians --

MUSICIANS
-- yes captain --

BONNET
-- play something optimistic --
(And as he continues his ascent and the musicians start to play --

CUT TO

THE SHROUDS AND BONNET, staring at the French ship as he climbs higher and they're continuing to blast away and

CUT TO

BONNET'S DECK, as another French shell lands and the worst fire yet breaks out, the largest, most dangerous flames, and right on top of that another shell bursts nearby, and things are really looking bad on deck and

CUT TO

BONNET, climbing wildly, and things aren't looking so terrific up here either, the waves are huge and the ship pitches and it's hard holding on but BONNET moves steadily on, desperate for a better view, and now he's thirty feet high, now forty now

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, CLOSE UP AND SCREAMING as he stares upwards and

CUT TO

BONNET AS HE FALLS. His hands slip from the rigging and he goes like a diver doing a back dive and

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, looking away, then back and

CUT TO

BONNET'S FOOT, caught in the rigging, saving him, stopping his fall and

CUT TO

BONNET, hanging there upside down a moment, finally scrambling back up into a vertical position and he is ashen; for another moment he hesitates. Then he takes a deep breath, and goes right back on climbing and

CUT TO

THE DECK FROM BONNET'S POSITION, flames and frenzy and noise and confusion and

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, eyes closed, repeating to himself over and over --

MR. WALPOLE
-- it <u>isn't</u> better than the

MR. WALPOLE (CONT)
sugar plantation, it isn't
better than the sugar plantation --

CUT TO

BONNET, fifty feet up there now, he stops, stares out at the French ship and

CUT TO

THE FRENCH SHIP -- still unharmed, still blasting away and

CUT TO

BONNET, studying the enemy and

CUT TO

THE MUSICIANS, playing as well as they can as everybody runs in front of them, behind them, into them and

CUT TO

BONNET -- calling out --

BONNET
-- Mr. Walpole --

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, staring up --

MR. WALPOLE
-- ready, sir --

CUT TO

BONNET, staring at the other ship, waiting for something, the perfect moment, God knows, but he's taking his time and as he does

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, by the gun, breath held and

CUT TO

BONNET, CLOSE UP.

BONNET
NOW!!!

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE.

MR. WALPOLE
Fire!
(And as the gun
blasts deafeningly --

CUT TO

THE DECK OF THE FRENCH SHIP -- for just a moment, they seem in perfect control and order -- but only for a moment. Because right then BONNET'S CANNONBALL blasts the shit out of the main mast, splintering it and as it starts to teter --

CUT TO

THE FRENCH CAPTAIN, staring at the mast and

CUT TO

THE FRENCH CREW, and all firing stops, everything stops and they all stare at the tetering mast and

CUT TO

THE MAST, supporting the crucial sails of the ship, and now it starts to waver more and more and

CUT TO

THE WHOLE GODDAM FRENCH CREW, abandoning positions and starting to run like crazy out of the way and

CUT TO

THE MAST, wavering worse now and there is the cracking sound of wood as the added pressure splinters the whole goddam mast and

CUT TO

THE CREW AND EVERYBODY ELSE, TEARING ONE WAY AND ANOTHER UNTIL WE

CUT TO

THE GIANT MAST AS IT FALLS with a crash like nothing you've ever heard and from that giant thing going down --

CUT TO

A LITTLE THING GOING UP -- it's a white flag, the surrender sign and the second it makes its appearance --

CUT TO

BONNET'S PIRATES, hollering in wild triumph and from that --

CUT TO

BONNET, high above them all, staring out at what he's wrought.

BONNET
(In awe)
...my God, I'm a pirate...
(HOLD ON THAT
MOMENT. Then --

CUT TO

THE TWO SHIPS LASHED TOGETHER. BONNET'S MEN are finishing hauling bails and barrels full of captured material onto their ship.

CUT TO

BONNET on his quarterdeck as GLASSEYE comes over.

GLASSEYE
We stripped 'em clean, captain.

BONNET
Then castoff.
(As GLASSEYE
nods, turns --

CUT TO

THE TWO SHIPS, disengaging. The wounded French vessel begins to float away.

CUT TO

BONNET, calling out to the French CAPTAIN; his accent is perfect.

BONNET
Au revoir, m'sieur.
(Beat; then --)
Merci.

CUT TO

THE FRENCH CAPTAIN; as he begins expressively to swear in French, we

CUT TO

BONNET addressing his pirates; the sun is higher now, it's later in the day.

BONNET
In honor of our most excellent beginning, I will allow you all to drink until you fall over --

VOICE (OVER)
-- Captain Bonnet, sir?

BONNET
What?
(And we

CUT TO

THE TOPMAN in the highest sails --

TOPMAN
Dutch ship on the horizon, heading this way.

CUT TO

BONNET, surprised.

BONNET
Another already?
(Turns to MR. WALPOLE)
My flag box, please.
(Now, quickly --

CUT TO

A DUTCH FLAG being raised, upside down and

CUT TO

THE DUTCH SHIP, much closer and

CUT TO

THE UPSIDE DOWN DUTCH FLAG BEING REPLACED BY THE JOLLY ROGER AND

CUT TO

THE DUTCH SHIP RUNNING UP THE WHITE FLAG OF SURRENDER and now

CUT TO

THE HOLD OF BONNET'S SHIP. The place is absolutely cram-jammed full of barrels and bales of spices and sugar and tobacco and hides and silks and perfumes and linen and cotton and ivory and tea and opium. There's not a square foot left free. Now --

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BONNET AND MR. WALPOLE, staring at their spoils.

MR. WALPOLE
How proud you must be.
(BONNET gives him a look)
What's wrong?

CUT TO

BONNET. CLOSE UP. Whispering.

BONNET
I haven't the faintest idea what I'm supposed to do now.

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, looking at BONNET.

MR. WALPOLE
You elude me, sir.

BONNET
We've been at sea a week, we've taken five ships, but I don't know a fence.

MR. WALPOLE
A what?

BONNET
(Snappishly)
A fence, a fence -- don't you know any pirate jargon? -- someone who disposes of stolen goods.

MR. WALPOLE
Why don't we just ask Glasseye or one of the others?

BONNET
And have them lose respect for me? Impossible. You see, when I was back in Barbados imagining all this, my plans naturally didn't include success. I assumed I'd have died heroically by now and --

VOICE OVER
-- Captain -- quickly --

CUT TO

GLASSEYE in the hold entrance.

GLASSEYE
A Portuguese ship, Captain -- it looks like the fattest of them all --
(And as he goes --

CUT TO

BONNET AND MR. WALPOLE.

BONNET
(Dazed, shakes his head)
Perhaps it will be carrying only small things.
(As they start to leave)
Nobody told me piracy was such hard work...

CUT TO

THE PORTUGUESE SHIP sailing quickly forward, flag flying.

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE running up a Portuguese flag upside down.

CUT TO

BONNET on the quarterdeck, looking up at the flag, then taking in his entire deck and as he looks --

CUT TO

BONNET'S PIRATES, hidden and ready for action as before. But they seem more confident now; there isn't all that much tension as before. They're on a winning streak and they know it and

CUT TO

THE PORTUGUESE SHIP, very close now and quickly

CUT TO

THE UPSIDE DOWN BEING REPLACED BY THE JOLLY ROGER. Now --

CUT TO

THE PORTUGUESE SHIP as <u>it</u> flies the jolly roger too and the second we see it --

ZOOM TO

GLASSEYE, in a state of shock --

GLASS EYE
Jesus Christ, we've just attacked Blackbeard.
(Now fast --

CUT TO

BONNET, as the realization of what he's just done sinks in.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD on his quarterdeck. He looks plenty formidable and pretty angry, but different from when we first saw him -- no burning ropes or that kind of thing. He's just sort of this dark powerhouse you don't want mad at you.

BLACKBEARD
Israel, my glass.

CUT TO

ISRAEL HANDS was this man's name. Tough and gnarled, he was BLACKBEARD'S closest companion and navigator. He hurries forward now, gives the telescope to BLACKBEARD.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, staring across through his telescope, concentrating, and quickly --

CUT TO

BONNET, standing there with MR. WALPOLE.

BONNET
Omigod, he's looking at me, what'll I do?

MR. WALPOLE
I think a smile might be in order.
(Now from that --

CUT TO

BONNET, as seen through BLACKBEARD'S telescope. BONNET is smiling as clearly as he can. Now, as he adds a friendly little wave of greeting --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, still holding his telescope steady as before.

BLACKBEARD
(To ISRAEL -- distinctly)
Who -- is - that - turd?
(ISRAEL shakes his head, says nothing)
Where do you think he found those funny clothes? If that's how pirate captains are dressing nowadays, we're all in trouble.
(As he continues to study BONNET)

CUT TO

BONNET AND MR. WALPOLE. BONNET continues to smile as before, but it's getting harder to hold now.

BONNET
He's still examining me, which can only mean he's impressed. If that were true, wouldn't it be something?

MR. WALPOLE
(Frightened)
The way I feel just now, sir, if we make it alive through the next five minutes, that would be something.

BONNET
Have no fear -- he recognizes a similar spirit, have no doubt --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND ISRAEL.

ISRAEL
(He expects a yes answer to this)
Well, shall we kill them now, sir?

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD.

BLACKBEARD
I suppose there's really no reason not to --
(And quickly --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD'S CREW. OLDER AND TOUGHER LOOKING THAN BONNET'S. THEY WAIT BY THEIR CANNONS.

CUT TO

BONNET'S CREW, and any feeling of confidence they had before is long gone. They stand by their cannons, staring in silence across to BLACKBEARD'S ship and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, abruptly shaking his head.

BLACKBEARD
No -- hold fire --
(Glances toward ISRAEL)
-- since we're all pirates, killing each other is really something of a waste --
(Beat)
-- besides, I am intrigued.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. CLOSE UP.

BLACKBEARD
Bring that creature here.
(Now, from that --

CUT TO

BONNET, climbing onto BLACKBEARD'S ship, which was called The Adventure. Below, in the water, half a dozen men are visible who have rowed BONNET across.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, seated on his quarterdeck, holding an enormous jug of rum which he swigs from constantly, watching as BONNET approaches. The Adventure, by the way, looks older than BONNET'S Revenge.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET as BONNET stops in front of the other man. BONNET tentatively holds out his hand to shake. BLACKBEARD doesn't take it, simply swigs his rum.

BONNET
I'm Stede Bonnet, sir, and I consider this an honor.

BLACKBEARD
Tell me, Bonnet; what exactly is it that you do?

BONNET
Why the same as you, but on a smaller scale, of course.

BLACKBEARD
(Indicating The Revenge)
You must have stolen your ship straight out of the shipyard, it seems that new.

BONNET
I bought the ship --
(And on this piece of information --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, and he's flabbergasted.

BLACKBEARD
-- Pirates don't buy ships, not if they have any self respect, they steal them and --
(Stops)
-- Bonnet your name was?

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET as BONNET Nods.

BLACKBEARD
I have been many times to the island of Barbados -- a sugar planter named Bonnet practically owns the place. Are you related?

BONNET
Rather significantly. Except I am a planter no longer, but a pirate captain, as you can see.

BLACKBEARD
(He's never seen anything remotely like BONNET before; drinks again)
Have you had any captures?

BONNET
(Apologetically)
Not today -- it's just been a

BONNET (CONT)
total waste from the time we woke up --

BLACKBEARD
(Cutting in)
-- have you ever had any captures?

BONNET
Five this week.

BLACKBEARD
Five?
(Looks dead at BONNET)
Take me to your hold.
(And on that --

CUT TO

THE HOLD OF BONNET'S SHIP, stuffed as before.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BONNET, with MR. WALPOLE, BLACKBEARD with ISRAEL, looking at all the booty.

BLACKBEARD
My God, you're doing better than I am --

BONNET
-- I'm sure it's just beginner's luck --

BLACKBEARD
(Roaring)
-- don't try to make me feel better, man; I don't need your sympathy --
(To ISRAEL, pointing to a container)
A barrel of perfume, Israel -- think what that will bring.

BONNET
(Moving right in)
Listen, you could help me. I need a good reliable fence.

BLACKBEARD
A what?

BONNET
A fence, a fence, someone who disposes of stolen goods.

ISRAEL
(Intrigued)
Is that what they're calling them now? Interesting.

BLACKBEARD
I have such a fellow yes; I call him my partner. I'm on my way to see him, in America.

BONNET
His name would be a great help to me.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. Huge --

BLACKBEARD
Money would be a great help to me!

CUT TO

BONNET, taken aback, tries to hold his ground, as BLACKBEARD advances on him.

BLACKBEARD (CONT)
Ten per cent of your take will be my take. If my man sells your merchandise, that is the cost.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, turning suddenly, starting out of the hold with ISRAEL right behind.

BLACKBEARD
If you say yes, sail with me to America; if no, find your own.

CUT TO

BONNET, calling after BLACKBEARD.

BONNET
All right; just so you assure me your man is reliable.

BLACKBEARD
Charles Eden reliable? Christ,

BLACKBEARD (CONT)
man, he ought to be -- he's the governor of North Carolina...
(And on that piece of news, he and ISRAEL exit)

BONNET
(Alone with MR. WALPOLE now and really excited --)
Ten percent of this --
(He spins, gestures around the hold)
-- to sail alongside Blackbeard?
(Beat)
Has any man in history ever made a better deal? --
(Now from BONNET --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND ISRAEL, alone, moving out of the hold area up toward the deck.

ISRAEL
(Pleased)
Ten per cent is a lot for just a name.

BLACKBEARD
It's nothing compared to what's coming.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. EXTREME CLOSE UP.

BLACKBEARD
That Bonnet is going to make me a lot of money. A <u>lot</u> of money.
(Beat)
And once that happens...

And now BLACKBEARD slowly draws his fingers across his throat in the stardard throat cutting motion. And then BLACKBEARD smiles -- but it's not the kind of smile that inspires confidence. HOLD for a moment, then --

CUT TO

Would you believe, America -- we're on a long shot, a deserted stretch of shoreline, the two pirate ships anchored close in; a single rowboat has been pulled onto the beach; we're looking at a North Carolina dawn.

A word here about North Carolina at this time. (Some of this will be repeated in the screenplay, some not. The main thing I want to set out here is the 'feel' of the place around 1717.)

Living in the best houses would have been like living in a wilderness vacation camp today. Clothes mostly itched; socks sagged because there wasn't sufficient elastic to keep them up; shoes were made from only one form -- there wasn't any right or left shoe, you just forced your feet into this one basic clump. Forget sanitation, you don't want to hear about it.

Running water had to be carried by bucket or shoulder yoke; what lamps there were smelled. People smelled too, so there was lots of powder used. Bugs were everywhere -- screens had been invented for windows but no one had thought to import them yet.

And everybody boozed. They believed that water was dangerous -- not just to bathe in (no one ever totally immersed themselves) but also weakening to the body. So children drank beer and hard cider and grownups drank rum and wine and brandy and the Dutch drank gin.

Life was hard and alcohol helped people get through it.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, following a narrow path through a moist marshy area. Lots of trees and vines and BLACKBEARD is using his sword to help clear the way. It's hot. BLACKBEARD is in good spirits as he leads the way.

BONNET
How far to Eden's house?

BLACKBEARD
Less than half an hour.

BONNET
(Warding off a host of enormous mosquitoes)
I'd heard America was lovely.

BLACKBEARD
It is, but of course, it's not all as nice as this.
(Glancing back to BONNET)
Keep an eye out for snakes.

CUT TO

BONNET, a little perturbed.

BONNET
Why? Are any of them poisonous?

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, as his great sword suddenly flashes down.

BLACKBEARD
That one was.
(And on those words --

CUT TO

A DEAD WATER MOCCASIN, bisected in the path.

CUT TO

BONNET, carefully and verrrry slowly edging around the snake. Then, as he hurries to catch up with BLACKBEARD --

CUT TO

A NARROW RUTTED ROAD; BLACKBEARD AND BONNET walk side by side now.

BONNET
How did you first come to approach Eden?

BLACKBEARD
Actually he approached me -- since his annual salary is only thirty pounds a year, and it costs him more than that to do his job, everyone naturally expects him to steal.

BONNET
Naturally.

BLACKBEARD
North Carolina is the poorest and most desperate of the Colonies, so local merchants don't ask too many questions about where items come from. And we tend to be cheaper than our more legitimate competitors, since everything we sell is stolen.

BONNET
You make it seem as if you're doing a service.

BLACKBEARD
Make no mistake about it, Bonnet -- pirates are a godsend.
(He stops suddenly, points --)
The governor's mansion.
(Now on those words --

CUT TO

A REALLY CRUMMY HOUSE. Dark, plain, small. Not at all the 'Monticello' like image we have of how our forefathers lived. Now from outside --

CUT TO

THE KITCHEN OF THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION, and it's hotter than a pistol inside, not just because it's hotter than a pistol outside, but because there is this huge fire going in the enormous kitchen fireplace.

MRS. EDEN tends the fire, handling a huge array of spits, kettles and pots. She smokes a pipe. One side of her face is terribly swollen. MRS. EDEN is forty and looks closer to seventy.

GOVERNOR CHARLES EDEN -- a great Falstaffian figure -- sits at the head of the table devouring breakfast. A dozen children sit flanking their father. They all talk with a southern accent, all eat with their fingers out of a large communal bowl.

Bugs are dive bombing all over, and when the family isn't busy scratching their itchy shirts, they are slapping at whatever flies into their area.

TEN YEAR ODD BOY
(Looking out the kitchen door)
It's Blackbeard, daddy.

EDEN
(Waving for BLACKBEARD AND BONNET to enter)
Business calls, children -- finish your beer like good boys and girls and be off with you.
(As the kids guzzle down their beer --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET entering. BLACKBEARD makes this introduction as the children excuse themselves and leave.

BLACKBEARD
Governor Charles Eden, Major Stede Bonnet, a fellow sea artist.
(As they shake --

CUT TO

MRS. EDEN by the fire, suddenly groaning, holding her swollen cheek. THE GOVERNOR goes to her, looks at her closely.

GOVERNOR EDEN
You catch me on a busy day, gentlemen -- Mrs. Eden has a bad tooth and I have to take her to the blacksmith so he can pull it.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, seating themselves at the table. BLACKBEARD pours two glasses from EDEN'S rum jug.

BLACKBEARD
Our talk shouldn't take long.

CUT TO

EDEN, gesturing for his wife to go get ready, suddenly whirls on BLACKBEARD -- his speech is like a Baptist minister. He can be a spellbinder and he knows it.

GOVERNOR EDEN
I can guess why you're here -- you want me to auction off your merchandise in my barn. You want me to gather any men of means within a day's ride and have them here by sunset.
(Looks at BLACKBEARD)
Well it's just not possible --
(Beat)
-- unless you swear to me that nothing you have for sale is stolen.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, horrified.

BLACKBEARD
Stolen? How can you even conceive of such a notion?

GOVERNOR EDEN
(Moving to BLACKBEARD)
Swear to me that you found every item.

BLACKBEARD
It's true -- I've been finding empty ships all over the ocean, the same with you, Bonnet?

BONNET
(Nods)
The empty ship phenomenon is much talked about these days.

GOVERNOR EDEN
I suppose it's all legal, then.

BLACKBEARD
What the hell to you mean, 'suppose', we've done this dozens of times.

CUT TO

EDEN. He dreads saying this.

EDEN
There...there may be a new law --
(Blurting it out)
-- the people of Virginia have asked that it be made illegal to do business with pirates. I haven't heard yet if England has agreed, but --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, erupting --

BLACKBEARD
Illegal to do business with pirates? Those goddam Virginians are trying to ruin me.

CUT TO

BONNET, as BLACKBEARD whirls on him.

BLACKBEARD
In the old days, when they were poor, I practically supported Virginia, but now that they've gotten fat from tobacco profits --
(Cuts himself off)
-- the golden days are going, Bonnet.
(Big)
What have pirates ever done for people to pick on us so?

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. CLOSE UP. To the heavens --

BLACKBEARD
I will have my vengeance on the good people of Virginia, I swear it.
(Now from this --

CUT TO

A BUNCH OF HOGS EATING GARBAGE. No, they are not in a pen, which is something we find out as we

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

A NARROW MUD ROAD and a few small houses and buildings. The hogs are roaming free, eating whatever they find of interest. (In those days, people tossed their slop into the street and hogs served as garbage men.)

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET are walking toward the town.

BLACKBEARD
Here's the biggest city in the area, Bonnet --
(Pointing to a building)
-- the Buzzard's Inn where we'll celebrate after tha auction. If the prices are low, I think I shall hold you for ransom.

BONNET
I'm afraid my wife would only pay if you promised to keep me.

BLACKBEARD
Your marriage, I take it, has been less than ideal.

BONNET
She lives but to torment me.

BLACKBEARD
(Seriously)
Why didn't you kill her?

CUT TO

BONNET. He thinks a moment.

BONNET
You know, that's really a very good question --
(And suddenly, with no warning whatsoever, BONNET is roughly grabbed and thrown aside as we

CUT TO

FOUR VICIOUS LOOKING MEN, SWORDS DRAWN, SURROUNDING BLACKBEARD. THEIR LEADER HAS HIS SWORD AT BLACKBEARD'S THROAT. BLACKBEARD'S sword is in it scabbard; there's nothing he can do. THE FOUR MEN bear the scars and old wounds of pirates.

LEADER
Bastard! -- we've been awaiting your return --
(And with that, he pushes forward slightly with his sword and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, trapped -- the sword has barely penetrated his neck, just enough for a drop of blood to appear at his throat -- which is noted for only two reasons: it's the first blood of the picture and it also ought to serve to indicate that these FOUR MEN are not playing games.

LIMPER
(ANOTHER of the four -- moving close)
Let me do it --

LEADER
-- no, you can kill him the second time --

CUT TO

BONNET, horrified, watching it as the THIRD PIRATE, ONE ARM, looks at him.

ONE ARM
-- you're a gentleman, we have no business with you, run along --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD -- he has remained silent throughout and says nothing, does nothing, just waits as --

LEADER
How much would you want to breathe awhile longer? --

BLACKBEARD
-- make your offer --

CUT TO

THE LEADER. A beat. Then -- with enjoyment --

LEADER
Beg a little --
(And on that --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, CLOSE UP, roaring at them even though the sword is deep at his throat --

BLACKBEARD
Beg? --
(Bigger)
-- beg? ++
(Bigger still)
-- me beg a tiny fart like you? --
(Suddenly a whisper)
-- be done with it, and the secret dies with me.

CUT TO

THE FOUR PIRATES. SMALL, the tiniest of the four, speaks.

SMALL
What secret?

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, making each word clear and distinct --

BLACKBEARD
The-location-of-my-buried-treasure --

CUT TO

THE FOUR PIRATES, as BLACKBEARD'S words hit home.

LEADER
Christ, that's right, his treasure --
(And suddenly --

CUT TO

BONNET, throwing his body into the air, right at the FOUR PIRATES and they hadn't been watching for it, hadn't expected it and the four of them are knocked off balance just enough for BLACKBEARD to be free --

BONNET
(Screaming)
Run, man, run --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD.

BLACKBEARD
Run? Why? There are only four of them --
(And as he draws his giant sword --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, EXTREME CLOSE UP. And there is a wild look of joy on his face as he makes one giant gutteral cry and

CUT TO

THE FOUR PIRATES, as BLACKBEARD charges into them and the swordfight begins. They all use the same kind of heavy curved cutlass, with the sharp end plenty sharp, the dull end heavy enough to give you a headache if it lands, and at first, the FOUR PIRATES are together but BLACKBEARD advances on them easily, swinging his giant cutlass, much bigger and heavier than any of the others and he's got surprise on his side still and seems in command until we

CUT TO

THE LEADER, crying 'spread out' and

CUT TO

THE FOUR PIRATES, moving away from each other, and now no matter which way BLACKBEARD turns, someone is behind him, and this is taking place on the edge of town, so there are a few small buildings, as said before, and hogs moving around, but there are also trees and brush because the tiny town was hacked out of the wilderness and

CUT TO

BONNET, drawing his sword -- it's a rapier, thin and long, the kind we're used to in Three Musketeer movies and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, glancing at BONNET --

BLACKBEARD
Get out of here with that twig --
(BONNET hesitates --
BLACKBEARD orders --)
-- I mean out! --
(And then he charges toward THE LEADER and

CUT TO

THE LEADER, forced to retreat and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, advancing on him, but behind BLACKBEARD now, SMALL has rushed in, and he's about to strike --

BLACKBEARD
Slow, Small, too slow --
(And he whirls the opposite way we ever expected, catching SMALL with the blunt end of his sword and SMALL crumbles unconscious and

CUT TO

THE LEADER, taking advantage, slashing with his sword, and as he cuts BLACKBEARD'S shoulder, blood starts to flow and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, stopping dead, staring at his wound which is of the flesh variety --

BLACKBEARD
Big mistake, that --
(And now he starts after the LEADER, abruptly and suddenly shifts balance and direction and

CUT TO

THE LIMPER, as BLACKBEARD slices him along the hip and the LIMPER drops his sword, cries out, falls, holding his wound and

CUT TO

SOME HOGS, wandering through the combat area and

CUT TO

ONE ARM, as he backs away trying to fend off what's coming as we

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, swinging his cutlass and it's a tremendous effort and THE LEADER is taking swipes at him too but he makes another

swing, breaks through ONE ARM'S defense, strikes home and ONE ARM FALLS, holding his stomach and now

CUT TO

THE LEADER, and he's all that's left now, but he attacks and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, gasping from the exhaustion of the fight, but not retreating and as the two men bang away

CUT TO

A COUPLE OF TOWNSPEOPLE standing in the doorway, watching; they seem to be enjoying the free spectable and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, as he moves forward, and THE LEADER is strong too, just not strong enough, and

CUT TO

THE LEADER, and he knows it's over now, but he keeps on fighting as best he can and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, his sword slicing into THE LEADER'S left arm, and

CUT TO

THE LEADER, a brave man, hanging onto his sword, but his efforts are starting to get feeble and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, as with one final swing, he sends the LEADER'S sword spinning out of his grasp.

CUT TO

THE LEADER, standing there, waiting.

CUT TO

MORE TOWNSPEOPLE, nodding excitedly to each other and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, his cutlass raised to strike.

BLACKBEARD
Beg a little...

CUT TO

THE LEADER. He hesitates a moment. Then, almost imperceptibly, he shakes his head 'no,' and the instant he does

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD swinging his sword a final time -- but with the thick heavy side, not the slicing one -- and

CUT TO

THE LEADER, instantly unconscious, but alive, dropping like a stone.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, gasping from the exertion; he's really whipped. BONNET hurries up.

BONNET
You're bleeding --

BLACKBEARD
(Nods)
I do when I'm wounded.
(He allows BONNET to lend him support as they start toward the Buzzard Inn. BLACKBEARD shakes his head)
It's a sad thing when your dearest friends want to kill you.

BONNET
They certainly seem a bit put out with you now.

BLACKBEARD
I think it's because I marooned them on a sandspit quite recently. I did it because, well, the fewer people to share the spoils, the more for Blackbeard.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, CLOSE UP. And he looks kind of sad.

BLACKBEARD
Oh, what a dreadful creature I am...

CUT TO

THE BUZZARD INN as they enter. It has several rooms downstairs, the tap room being quite large. Lots of game and lots of fowl hang from the ceiling, to ripen, which was common then, but still gives the place a kind of different look. The Inn is, at the moment, empty.

BLACKBEARD
(Calling out)
Mr. Buzzard -- come quickly, sir --
I have need to bind a wound.
Mr. Buzzard!

CUT TO

A WOMAN OF MAYBE 35. If Sophia Loren needed a stand-in, this one could fill the job. A really luscious, voluptuous female. She is the WIDOW TYLER.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, as BONNET helps BLACKBEARD into a chair.

BLACKBEARD
Where's Buzzard?

WIDOW TYLER
Dead of malaria, the place is mine now, I was his sister.

BLACKBEARD
Called?

WIDOW TYLER
By you, the Widow Tyler.

BLACKBEARD
I need to buy a sheet to tear apart. Do you have any?

WIDOW TYLER
This is an inn, of course we have a sheet.

BLACKBEARD
A clean one?

WIDOW TYLER
(Beat)
I'll have to check.
(As she turns to exit --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET watching her go.

BLACKBEARD
And some rum while we're waiting.
(She is gone; he shakes his head)
What an ugly old sow that was.

BONNET
I rather fancied her.

BLACKBEARD
Old, old, ohhhhhhhhhhhhh...
(As his voice trails off --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. Staring at something. There is an almost beatific look on his face now as we

CUT TO

A VISION, carrying rum and two glasses. Maybe sixteen, she is small waisted, big eyed, and sort of perfect in every way.

THE VISION
Rum someone wanted?

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET. BLACKBEARD just stares dumbstruck.

BONNET
Here, thank you.

CUT TO

THE VISION, moving gracefully to them, putting down their order, the instant she does --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, going to one knee in an almost courtly way for someone his size and considering he's still bleeding; he reaches out, takes her right hand in his huge paw, gently kisses her fingertips.

BLACKBEARD
Marry me --

THE VISION
---but sir --
(And she tries to pull her hand away --)

BLACKBEARD
(Holding on)
-- I mean it --
(He does, by the way --
to BONNET)
-- tell her I don't act like this ordinarily --

BONNET
-- that is probably the first fingertip he has ever kissed in his life --

BLACKBEARD
(Rising)
Promise you'll marry me --

VISION
No.

BLACKBEARD
All right -- promise you won't marry anyone else til I return --

THE VISION
When are you returning?

BLACKBEARD
Tonight.

CUT TO

THE VISION. CLOSE UP. Laughing, almost starting to smile.

THE VISION
That I can do.
(HOLD on her face
a moment, then --

CUT TO

GOVERNOR EDEN'S BARN. EARLY EVENING. The place is lit by small torches and the sale is in progress. BLACKBEARD, with ISRAEL HANDS has his stuff in one area while BONNET, MR. WALPOLE beside him, has his merchandise across the barn.

ISRAEL holds a largish bucket filled with money. GOVERNOR EDEN is more or less acting as auctioneer. TWO OR THREE DOZEN MEN, dressed as farmers mostly, are doing the buying. They follow EDEN as he points to some bales of silk.

GOVERNOR EDEN
All right, let's keep moving, we can finish Blackbeard's part

GOVERNOR EDEN (CONT)
of the auction by disposing of these ten bales of silk, found recently floating at sea.

FIRST BUYER
I'll take all ten at one pound a bale.

GOVERNOR EDEN
This is finest quality silk, one pound is an insult --

FIRST BUYER
-- make it a pound and a half --

GOVERNOR EDEN
-- why not make it two? --

SECOND BUYER
-- two --

THIRD BUYER
-- four ---

FOURTH BUYER
(Very authoritative)
-- seventy pounds for the lot.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, pleased as he looks around.

CUT TO

THE BUYERS. None will beat the FOURTH BUYER'S PRICE.

GOVERNOR EDEN
Sold, then.
(He starts across the barn to BONNET'S side)

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, as the FOURTH BUYER puts seventy pounds into ISRAEL'S bucket.

BLACKBEARD
Divide it carefully, Israel -- one share per man, half again extra for you, double share for me.

ISRAEL
It's not as if I haven't done it before --
(And as he goes to a corner of the barn, dumps the bucket onto the ground, begins to count --

CUT TO

BONNET, MR. WALPOLE holding a bucket alongside him, in front of his silk bales as GOVERNOR EDEN leads the BUYERS over.

GOVERNOR EDEN
(Indicating the silk)
Also found at sea?
(BONNET nods)
Well, as long as there's nothing illegal, we'll begin. This seems of the same quality as the other --

FOURTH BUYER
-- and I again bid seven pounds the bale.
(Grumbling from the OTHER BUYERS but no one tops the bid)

BONNET
You have a passion for silk, sir.

FOURTH BUYER
I make clothing in my shop --

BONNET
-- and you understand quality.
(THE FOURTH BUYER nods)
As do I, sir. The price is twenty-five pounds per bale or it is nothing.

CUT TO

THE GROUP. Stunned silence.

FOURTH BUYER
Then it is nothing.

BONNET
(To MR. WALPOLE)
Get some men to take it back to the ship.

BONNET (CONT)
(To GOVERNOR EDEN)
As everyone knows, there is a silk shortage in Maryland -- eighty pounds per bale was the most recent price. I was willing to take twenty-five because of convenience, but since that's no longer possible --

CUT TO

THE FOURTH BUYER. There is a pause. Then --

FOURTH BUYER
All right; twenty-five per bale --
(From that --

ZOOM TO

BLACKBEARD, furious --

BLACKBEARD
What?!!!
(Advancing)
You gave him more than me?
(Now, as he starts to draw his sword --

CUT TO

BONNET, talking very calmly to the FOURTH BUYER.

BONNET
Perhaps you might possibly reconsider your bid --

FOURTH BUYER
(Panicked)
-- please God I reconsider --
(To BLACKBEARD)
-- I beg you, sir, for the honor of paying you additional money --

GOVERNOR EDEN
(As BLACKBEARD hesitates)
-- Blackbeard is known far and wide for his forgiving nature.

BLACKBEARD
(Putting away his sword)
True.
(As he goes to BONNET --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, talking quietly now.

BLACKBEARD
That was very clever of you, Bonnet; tell me though -- how did you know about the Maryland silk shortage?

BONNET
I made it up, but with conviction.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, and for the first time now, he looks at BONNET with admiration.

BLACKBEARD
I'm beginning to understand how you wealthy people do it now -- you lie better than other people.

CUT TO

BONNET. He nods.

BONNET
It's half the battle...
(And as he begins to smile --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD DANCING. We're back at the Buzzard Inn later that evening. HE holds THE VISION in his arms as he whirls her around the tap room. He is, suprisingly enough, graceful with her. Now --

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

THE BUZZARD. Empty when we saw it before, it is full of drinking and drunken pirates now, a few already motionless on the floor. Musicians are playing, there is a lot of noise; a number of gambling games, mostly backgammon are going on.

THE WIDOW TYLER is feverishly fending off any advances that come her way while at the same time dispensing brandy, rum and beer as quickly as she can. For cash. (One of the reasons Colonists liked pirates was because they spent whatever they had almost as quickly as they could.)

BONNET sits with MR. WALPOLE, taking it all in. Every so often, he glances toward the WIDOW TYLER, then quickly away. He is the least sober we have ever seen him.

BONNET
Can you think of one single place you'd rather be?

MR. WALPOLE
I happen to have a long list of alternatives in my pocket, major.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND THE VISION. He is as struck with affection as when he first laid eyes on her. The music comes to an end, they stop dancing, she starts away --

THE VISION
Thank you, but now --

BLACKBEARD
(Throwing coins to the musicians)
More.
(As the music starts --

CUT TO

THE VISION, as BLACKBEARD sweeps her into his arms again, and they spin about the floor of the tavern.

THE VISION
I don't doubt your sincerity, but I am frightened, sir; I am, at sixteen, still pure.

BLACKBEARD
Then you have no choice but to marry me -- the best way by far to learn sex is from a legent --
(Whispering)
...I work miracles on a mattress, child, that is common knowledge...

CUT TO

THE VISION, looking at him. No question about it, she's intrigued. Now --

CUT TO

GLASSEYE, entering excited, going to a group of a DOZEN PIRATES, one of whom, SCARFACE, is larger than the rest.

GLASSEYE
All right, listen -- I've managed

GLASSEYE (CONT)
to locate two widows, one old maid, and a wife who's husband she thinks is dying.

SCARFACE
(Dubiously)
What do they look like?

GLASSEYE
(Stunned)
Look like?
(Big)
We're not so pretty, y'know.
{SCARFACE shrugs, nods, and as the DOZEN MEN rise and start to leave --

CUT TO

THE WIDOW TYLER, as THE VISION runs over to her by the bar.

THE VISION
Mommy, can I marry Blackbeard?

WIDOW TYLER
(She is beautiful, but she's also been around -- without breaking her rum pouring motion --)
What's the deal?

THE VISION
He says I'll be famous, he'll give me all the money he made tonight and he loves me.

WIDOW TYLER
Will he throw in his buried treasure?

THE VISION
I'll go ask him.

WIDOW TYLER
(Calling after her)
If he will, I'd grab it.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND THE VISION. He is seated in a corner table now, cradling an enormous rum jug.

BLACKBEARD
What do you think I've been burying it for, except to someday give it to my eternal love. Of course it's yours -- I'll sail in the morning to retrieve it.

THE VISION
(One final hesitation)
Okay then --
(She stops, upset)
Oh no.

BLACKBEARD
'Oh no' does not exist -- speak and I will erase it.

THE VISION
I want a proper wedding -- a real minister, and at this hour, there's nobody.
(She looks almost forlorn)

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. He looks almost joyous.

BLACKBEARD
Child, how can that be a problem when the most famous and successful minister in all the Caribbean sits in this very room?
(And as he points across --

CUT TO

BONNET, eyes half closed, humming along with the music.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND THE VISION. She's a bit suspicious.

THE VISION
You sure he's a minister?

BLACKBEARD
Well obviously, he's not a pirate, not dressed like that.

THE VISION
If he's a minister, how come he's with you?

BLACKBEARD
(Without missing a beat)
Why, to redeem me, child. He has already converted the entire island of Barbados. I am his greatest challenge.

THE VISION
Oh, okay -- if he'll marry us, I'll do it.
(As she leaves --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, whispering fiercely to one another --

BONNET
-- I can't and I won't --

BLACKBEARD
-- I've said you would --

BONNET
-- it won't be a goddam wedding, don't you understand? -- I'm not a real minister --

BLACKBEARD
-- of course it won't be a goddam wedding, I've got twelve other wives already --

BONNET
-- I'm sorry, I cannot be a party to such a charade -- no power on earth can make me change my mind.

BLACKBEARD
(There is a pause; then --)
Sail with me.

CUT TO

BONNET. Not sure he's heard.

BONNET
What was that?

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD.

BLACKBEARD
You've made your men enough for

BLACKBEARD (CONT)
a month of drinking -- leave them and the Revenge for a little, bring Walpole and be my guest. I think you'd like that, am I correct?

CUT TO

BONNET. He says nothing, looks at BLACKBEARD.

BLACKBEARD
Come, we'll have adventures and learn from each other. I'll teach you how to pirate, you'll teach me how to rich.

BONNET
(Excited)
I am overcome with sudden religious fervor!

BLACKBEARD
The wedding is on?

BONNET
(With dignity)
You may call me pastor or reverend, as you choose.
(Now, a strange look hits him and we

CUT TO

THE DOOR AND THE FOUR MEN BLACKBEARD fought earlier, entering in a clump. Now they freeze as we

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, bearing down on them, and

CUT TO

THE FOUR, frightened, standing close, ready to bolt and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, arms suddenly going out wide, embracing the quartet.

BLACKBEARD
My dearest companions, God is indeed kind -- He sent you

BLACKBEARD (CONT)
to attend my marriage --
(No one refuses BLACKBEARD
-- as all FOUR nod --

CUT TO

A ROOM OFF THE BAR, the raucous noise vaguely audible throughout. In the room are BLACKBEARD AND THE VISION kneeling in front of BONNET. THE FOUR PIRATES stand behind BLACKBEARD, along with MR. WALPOLE, MR. WALPOLE, by the way, is terribly moved by the occasion. BLACKBEARD is a bit tidier than we're used to seeing him. THE VISION has never looked as extraordinary.

THE VISION
It really is exciting --

BLACKBEARD
-- Pastor Bonnet, love is being
kept waiting --

BONNET
(To THE VISION)
Oughtn't your mother be here?

THE VISION
I told her and she said she'd try
to slip away if business slowed --
(The noise is very
much still with us)
-- doesn't sound like it has,
though; see, we live a year
off a night like this.

CUT TO

BONNET nods. He is very ministerial throughout.

BONNET
Give her the ring.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD as he takes an expensive looking ring off one of his giant fingers, takes THE VISION'S hand, slips it on. Or tries to. Itwould fit more happily on her thumb.

BLACKBEARD
For safekeeping.
(He puts it in her
palm, closes her
hand around it)

BONNET
Your name, child.

THE VISION
(Tiny voice now)
Letitia Christian Tyler, your eminence.

BONNET
Now yours, sir.

BLACKBEARD
Blackbeard, you know that.

BONNET
Surely you were not Christened Blackbeard. What did your mother call you?

BLACKBEARD
Most of the time it was 'you little bastard.'

BONNET
(With force and dignity)
Your true name and be quick.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, eyes closed now, trying like hell to think. He opens his eyes, looks almost plaintively at BONNET.

BLACKBEARD
It's been so long since anyone's used it.
(Pounding a fist on the floor)
Damn now -- it was either Teach or Tatch or Thatch. And the first was Ed or Ned.
(Shakes his head sadly)
Too many years, Pastor, and too much rum; I can do no better.

CUT TO

BONNET.

BONNET
(Quickly)
Edward Teach and Letitia Tyler, consider yourselves married.

CUT TO

THE WEDDED COUPLE, starting to embrace, then she stops, looks up.

THE VISION
That's it?

BONNET
We are noted, in Barbados, for our to the point ceremonies.

THE VISION
It hardly feels like I'm married at all.

BONNET
(With a look at BLACKBEARD)
Wait.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, as he engulfs THE VISION in a passionate embrace.

CUT TO

BONNET, stepping around them, gesturing for people to leave. MR. WALPOLE, in tears, follows BONNET and the FOUR PIRATES out.

MR. WALPOLE
Simple, but most moving, sir.

BONNET
You'd cry at any wedding.

MR. WALPOLE
(Dabbing at his eyes)
Begging your pardon, Major, I didn't at yours.
(Before he closes the door BONNET looks back and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, still kissing THE VISION; she has all but disappeared in his giant arms...Now --

CUT TO

THE TAP ROOM OF THE BUZZARD. THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. DOZENS OF PIRATES lie quietly sprawled on the floor.

BONNET, awake, sits idly by himself, glancing every so often toward the ceiling. From above drift down sounds of THE VISION in what is either panic or ecstacy, plus intermittent growls from BLACKBEARD.

THE WIDOW TYLER, taking off her apron, comes from the next room, her work for the night finally done. She looks at BONNET.

WIDOW TYLER
Anything more?

BONNET
(Hesitates, shakes his head. Another cry from above.
It sounds Homeric. I hope she survives.

WIDOW TYLER
I was married at fourteen to a man who weighed three hundred pounds. If I can survive that, she can survive this.
(Beat)
You seem sad.

BONNET
(Quietly)
Actually, I've never been happier.

CUT TO

THE WIDOW TYLER. Studies him a moment.

WIDOW TYLER
It's a decent enough face, yours.

BONNET
And yours is a great deal more.

WIDOW TYLER
Come along then.
(One hand reaches out)

BONNET
(Nervous now)
Where.

WIDOW TYLER
I've never bedded with a gentleman.

BONNET
My wife has informed me, over a period of years, that I'm not much good with women.

WIDOW TYLER
(Softly)
...let me be the judge...
(And as she leads him
to the stairs --

CUT TO

OUTSIDE THE BUZZARD, the following dawn. ISRAEL AND MR. WALPOLE appear, leading a bunch of incredibly hung over PIRATES from BLACKBEARD'S crew. As they head toward the beach --

CUT TO

BONNET, moving alone through the doorway of the Buzzard. It's impossible to tell from his face how the night went, well or disastrously. He starts off following the pirates, then turns as he hears a sound and we

CUT TO

THE WIDOW TYLER in her bedroom window. She looks happy as a clam, eyes bright. She brings her fingers to her lips, throws a kiss as we

CUT TO

BONNET, catching it. And he has never smiled a lot, but he's sure smiling now. As they stare at each other in silence --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, gloriously happy and hung over, staggering out of the Buzzard. He carries a fresh rum jug, drinks, goes to BONNET, offers him the jug which BONNET accepts.

BLACKBEARD
I must tell you something before we begin --
(As BONNET drinks)
-- since I am fundamentally honest, it's important that you know that I may double cross you if the need arises.

BONNET
Of course, of course; you have your reputation to protect.

BLACKBEARD
I'm glad you understand.
(Now he turns, calls out --)
...Beauty...
(And from that --

CUT TO

THE VISION, throwing open another second story window; she is incredibly rumpled and looks about five years older and a lot more exhausted than she did the night before. But not unhappy. From her --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, staring up at THE VISION.

BLACKBEARD
Goodbye, beloved wife -- I'll be back soon with my buried treasure --

THE VISION
-- I'll be waiting --

BLACKBEARD
-- my heart remains with you --

THE VISION
-- I'll keep it safe --

CUT TO

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTER, waving.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, a final wave back. Then they start to slowly move away. BLACKBEARD puts an arm around BONNET'S shoulder.

BLACKBEARD
Such a sweet child.
(To BONNET)
What was her name?

BONNET
Letitia, for chrissakes.

BLACKBEARD
(Guilt wracked)
Of course, Letitia, how could I forget so quickly?

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, CLOSE UP.

BLACKBEARD
(His litany)
Oh, what a dreadful creature I am...
(Now, quickly --

CUT TO

A BUNCH OF BLACKBEARD'S PIRATES, all of them hanging precariously on ropes over the sides of his ship, cleaning the outside with thick brushes. (This cleaning went on all the time, since speed was so important, pirates were constantly scrubbing at their hulls, getting rid of any kind of rot or growth that might slow them down.) From these men hanging in space over the water --

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET pushing away from the ship in a rowboat. There is a lush tropical island not far away.

And between them is a closed chest; maybe it contains treasure, maybe not, we can't tell yet. Also a heavy shovel is half visible in the bottom of the boat.

BLACKBEARD
(Standing up, calling to ISRAEL)
Keep them working, we'll be back before dark.
(ISRAEL nods)
There are said to be French ships in these waters -- with a little wink from God, tomorrow we'll all be drinking red wine from the barrel.
(As he sits --

CUT TO

BONNET, rowing toward the lush island. BLACKBEARD studies him a moment.

BLACKBEARD
No other living man has ever seen my treasure, you realize that.

BONNET
Why do you trust me?

BLACKBEARD
You're the richest pirate in the history of the world -- I think that has something to do with it.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD as he reaches into his pocket, takes out a worn, folded piece of paper.

BLACKBEARD
The directions -- I'm as often without these as without my sword.
(Hands to BONNET who stops rowing, unfolds)

BONNET
You've beautiful writing.

BLACKBEARD
I myself am illiterate --
(Leans back, closes his eyes)
-- I dictated that to an English nobleman before he suddenly died.

BONNET
(Reading)
'Where the shadow of the tree meets the shadow of the beast; Begin you there and walk due east.'
(Looks at BLACKBEARD)
Does that make sense?

BLACKBEARD
(Eyes still closed, smiling)
Let's hope so.
(Now from that --

CUT TO

A ROCK. If you squint, it looks kind of like a lion. Now --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET on the lush island as BONNET points excitedly --

BONNET
Look -- the beast --
(Pointing again)
-- meets the tree shadow -- <u>there</u> --

CUT TO

THE TWO SHADOWS MEETING.

CUT TO

BONNET, running to the spot, lugging the heavy shovel while BLACKBEARD carries the chest.

BONNET
Walk east -- but how far?

BLACKBEARD
Read.

BONNET
(Reading)
'When the sand can be seen
And the waves from the sea --
Proceed you then
to the fallen tree.'
(And on that --

CUT TO

THE SAND AND SEA, just starting to be visible over a rise, and

CUT TO

BONNET whirling, looking around as we

CUT TO

A GIGANTIC fallen tree. BONNET starts toward it, abruptly stops.

BLACKBEARD
What is it?

BONNET
Other footsteps have been here --
(And on that --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, and as he starts to hurry --

CUT TO

BONNET and BLACKBEARD, breathing heavily, in a deeply foliaged part of the island.

BONNET
God damndest instructions I
ever saw.
(Reading with effort)
'In the deepest brush --
'Neath the deadest hive --
There the treasure be...
If you're still alive!
(And as he plunges
forward --

CUT TO

A LARGE BEEHIVE. It is long since empty. It rests in the corner of a tree trunk and a large branch.

CUT TO

BONNET, moving directly under the hive, making sure, then, plunging the shovel into the soft earth and

CUT TO

THE GROUND AS BONNET tears at it with the shovel and

CUT TO

THE SHOVEL, at last striking metal and on the sound --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, going to his knees beside the hole.

BLACKBEARD
It's there.

CUT TO

BONNET, exhausted and sweating from his digging, watching as we

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, clearing the earth and sand away with his hands, revealing a large chest buried in the ground. He takes a breath, reaches down into the hole, grabs the chest by its handles and with one mighty heave, lifts it clear.

CUT TO

BONNET, on his knees now beside the other man.

BONNET
(Almost in awe -- he's heard about it for so long)
...Blackbeard's treasure --
(And on that

CUT TO

THE TREASURE CHEST AS BLACKBEARD THROWS IT OPEN AND IT CONTAINS -- a jug of rum, nothing more, and

CUT TO

BONNET, stunned, he can't believe it and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, and obviously he can, for he reaches in and takes out the rum, uncorks it, starts to drink, stops, hands it to BONNET.

BLACKBEARD
You first, you did the digging.

BONNET
But -- your treasure --

BLACKBEARD
-- there never was any, Bonnet --
no pirate has ever buried treasure --
we spend our money much too quickly --
buried treasure is a myth, begun by
Captain Kidd I think.

BONNET
But you continue the myth.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD as he takes the rum jug, drinks deep.

BLACKBEARD
I must; people expect it of me.
As they will of you, Stede -- it's
how you pirate. Find an island,
make up some silly instructions,
and start spreading rumors.

CUT TO

BONNET, watching. BLACKBEARD seems sad now, as he stares at the empty treasure chest; as he speaks now, you get the feeling that he's really starting to like BONNET.

BLACKBEARD
People will believe your rumors,
I promise that. Once, years ago
in Barbados, I'd heard about your
home so often I stole a horse and
rode out to see for myself.
(Beat)
Ever since then, an estate like
that is what I've dreamed of
retiring to. That is my dream --
and this --
(He points and we

CUT TO

THE EMPTY TREASURE CHEST.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, looking sadly at the thing.

BLACKBEARD
-- this is my reality.
(There is a pause.
Then, soft)
...shit...
(HOLD a moment
before we

CUT TO

THE HOLD OF A SHIP DIFFERENT FROM ANY WE'VE SEEN. Full of wooden barrels.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

A FRIGHTENED FRENCH SEA CAPTAIN AND

PULL BACK MORE TO REVEAL

BLACKBEARD, sword out, and BONNET. In the background: WALPOLE and ISRAEL.

BLACKBEARD
Stede -- ask him if he minds
if we took all his wine.

BONNET
(Speaks in French to
the SCARED CAPTAIN
who replies rapidly
back in French)
He would be thrilled.

BLACKBEARD
(Gesturing to ISRAEL
who nods, leaves.
BLACKBEARD starts to
follow)
I wonder if 1717 was a good year...
(As he goes --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD'S CABIN. Larger than BONNET'S was, it's still nothing palacial. And it's made more cramped by the fact that BLACKBEARD has had an entire barrel of wine brought in and opened. HE AND BONNET sit drinking wine from large containers. BLACKBEARD, when he finishes his, simply dips into the wine barrel for a refill. Judging from outside, it's morning, bright and sunny. Judging from the way the men perspire, it's also hot. A knock at the door and ISRAEL enters.

ISRAEL
Pardon, Captain, but some of those barrels of wine we took weren't barrels of wine.
(And he tosses something --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, catching it. It's a pig made of tin, less than a foot long. BLACKBEARD turns it over briefly in his hands.

BLACKBEARD
A tin pig benefits us nothing. How many are there?

ISRAEL
Three barrels of them.

BLACKBEARD
Save the barrels for their wood, and pitch the pigs immediately.
(As ISRAEL nods --

CUT TO

THE WINE BARREL, at a considerably lower level now. BLACKBEARD bends forward, refills his container. He has consumed a great deal of wine, a certain amount of time has passed.

BLACKBEARD
What <u>are</u> you doing?

CUT TO

BONNET, scraping at the tin pig with a small knife.

BONNET
Curious as to who would want three barrels of these things --
(Scraping away)
-- the Spanish used to hide valuables this way, long ago, and I wonder if the French --
(He stops talking suddenly --)

BLACKBEARD
-- what? --

BONNET
(Handing it over)
-- I don't know yet --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, grabbing his giant cutlass, making a few swipes with it at the tin surface and then --

CUT TO

THE PIG. Where the tin has been cut away, it glows and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD -- stunned --

BLACKBEARD
--Christ, these are solid silver --
(Erupting to his feet --
huge --)
-- Israel! --
(And as he charges
toward the door,
BONNET after --

CUT TO

THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HIS ROOM AS BLACKBEARD races, screaming ISRAEL'S name and

CUT TO

A FLIGHT OF STAIRS AS BLACKBEARD flies toward them, takes them three at a time, still hollering and

CUT TO

THE DECK AND SUNSHINE AS BLACKBEARD bulls open a door and as he runs into the light --

CUT TO

A HUNDRED TIN PIGS IN SLOW MOTION, falling, falling through the crisp clean air, falling slowly down toward the deep water, and they spin, some of them one way, some another, all pretty and graceful and as they land they make pretty graceful splashes and we watch as for a moment, they're visible until they sink forever out of sight and then --

CUT TO

ISRAEL, regular motion again, pulling the empty barrel from the railing, setting it on deck.

ISRAEL
(Smiling -- to BLACKBEARD)
All finished, sir.

BLACKBEARD, unable at first to do anything. He stands holding the one tin pig, clutches it to him as if it were a baby.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. CLOSE UP, wild with anguish.

BLACKBEARD
Oh God --
(Bigger)
-- God --
(Huge)
-- God! -- God!!!
(In his eyes now: tears)
-- GODDDDDDD!!!
(From this, quickly --

CUT TO

A CORNER OF THE DECK. BLACKBEARD, forlorn, sits alone with his rum jug. There is no telling how much the man has consumed. BONNET approaches --

BONNET
Ship on the horizon.
(BLACKBEARD just shrugs)
I believe it is from Virginia.

BLACKBEARD
(On the word 'Virginia' a light in his eye. He rises)
Maybe killing some people will help me feel better.
(Now, from that deck --

CUT TO

THE DECK OF A DIFFERENT SHIP.

BLACKBEARD stands in the center, while a GROUP OF PASSENGERS are squeezed together against the railing. They seem well dressed and in their 20's. BONNET is talking to them as we

CUT TO

ISRAEL, moving across the deck toward BLACKBEARD.

ISRAEL
Not a lot in the hold -- some tobacco leaf is all --

BONNET
(Joining them)
It's a group starting the European Grand tour -- Winthrops, Byrds, Lees -- all the leading Virginia families.

BLACKBEARD
(Nods; moves toward them)
You're bright young men -- suggestions, please -- what shall I do with you?

FEMALE VOICE
(Haughty and imperious, it comes from the group)
You will do precisely nothing. Other than send us on our way.
(And now --

CUT TO

AN ELDERLY OBVIOUSLY TERRIBLY RICH WOMAN. One look lets you know the hardest work she ever did was probably lift a soup spoon. She clearly dislikes BLACKBEARD and hasn't the least fear of him as she moves into view.

HAUGHTY LADY
(Dead at BLACKBEARD)
That, in case you missed it, was an order.

BONNET
(Excited; before BLACKBEARD can answer)
Either she apologizes or we'll make her walk the plank.

BLACKBEARD
(Blinks, looks at BONNET)
Walk the what?

BONNET
The plank, my God, the plank.

BLACKBEARD
(Sighs)
Bonnet, that is another of your misconceptions -- if I wanted to put this monstress in the water, I would simply throw her ass over the side.
(To the HAUGHTY LADY)
Clearly, you have no fear of dying.

HAUGHTY LADY
No, but you should -- it is but a matter of time.

BLACKBEARD
Oh? Where is that written?

HAUGHTY LADY
On every proclamation board in the Colony -- signed by the

HAUGHTY LADY (CONT)
Governor himself -- 100 pounds for the death of Blackbeard.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, stunned, upset.

BLACKBEARD
That's all he thinks I'm worth?

CUT TO

THE DECK as BLACKBEARD whirls into action.

BLACKBEARD
(To ISRAEL)
Lower a boat --
(Pointing to a strong young VIRGINIAN)
-- You shall row us.
(Looks at BONNET)
How many hostages have we?

BONNET
Ten in all.

BLACKBEARD
Well, if a lower class pirate is worth a hundred pounds dead, surely an aristocrat is worth a thousand pounds alive.
(Big)
I shall be back by dusk with ten thousand pounds!

CUT TO

THE LONG ROWBOAT being lowered. BLACKBEARD AND BONNET stand by the rail, waiting. THE YOUNG VIRGINIAN, the rower, has two oars.

ISRAEL
(Hurrying up to BLACKBEARD)
The medicine chest is running low on bat's dung --

BLACKBEARD
-- our health will have to wait for another time.
(Glances toward shore)

BLACKBEARD (CONT)
An hour's row would you guess?
(ISRAEL nods)
Very well -- if Bonnet and I have not returned by dusk, it will simply mean we are dead. In that event, please return all these hostages to Virginia --
(Beat)
-- dismembered.

HAUGHTY LADY
You enjoy trying to frighten people -- you actually glory in being cruel --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. He stops.

BLACKBEARD
These are cruel times, madam -- torture is still legal in Scotland; in England, the finest physicians prescribe whipping as standard treatment for the insane.
(Beat)
But when I hear that word -- 'cruel' -- yours is the face I see.

CUT TO

THE HAUGHTY LADY. Hard as nails.

HAUGHTY LADY
We have never met til now.

BLACKBEARD
The rich look the same the whole world over. In London once, they held a public hanging and all the rich came in their carriages to see. The condemned man dropped, the rope snapped taut --
(Long pause)
-- but he did not die; madam -- they always used a rope too short to break a neck. And then, madam -- them from this

BLACKBEARD (CONT)
crowd of thousands watching the kicking figure, a boy rushed out --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. CLOSE UP now.

BLACKBEARD
-- this boy jumped and grabbed the man's legs, trying with his extra weight to put the condemned out of his misery -- families of the victims were allowed to aid in this way.
(Building)
And the crowd roared approval.
(Still more)
And the child tried to help the hanging man die.
(Quietly)
And all the rich -- all the ladies with your face, madam -- they clapped politely and laughed behind their fans...
(HOLD ON BLACKBEARD FOR AWHILE...Then --

CUT TO

THE VIRGINIA SHORE, perhaps a mile off.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, comfortable in the boat, as the ROWER steadily brings them nearer shore. BLACKBEARD drinks from his rum jug, hands it to BONNET.

BONNET
(Looks at BLACKBEARD)
I wanted to ask you; that hanging story, the one you told the bitch -- was any of it true?

BLACKBEARD
My father was the man at the end of the rope, Stede -- I was that child.

CUT TO

BONNET.. CLOSE UP. He hadn't expected the reply and suddenly, deeply, he is touched. He brings the rum jug to his mouth quickly, drinks...HOLD ON BONNET, then --

CUT TO

A WHARF ON THE VIRGINIA SHORE. Rich families either had their own or shared them, and ships would anchor alongside to load up on tobacco. Right now there is wild activity on the wooden structure, women running this way and that, a dozen men waiting with rifles, pointing them toward the approaching rowboat as we

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, standing up in the boat, one arm holding his giant sword to the throat of the ROWER.

BLACKBEARD
Ah, my good and beloved Virginians, how sweet of you to welcome me --
(And as he begins blowing kisses to the men with the rifles pointed at him --

CUT TO

A LARGE ROOM IN A VIRGINIA MANSION. Much bigger and plusher than anything seen in Carolina.

BLACKBEARD, BONNET, AND THE ROWER are separated at one end of the room -- BLACKBEARD still has his sword out, THE ROWER is very much still their shield and hostage. A trembling maid is putting down a tray of tea, cups and saucers by BONNET.

ALL THE WEALTHY VIRGINIANS are at the other end of the room, some of them still armed. OTHER VIRGINIANS enter. Now, as a distinguished looking MAN comes in --

BLACKBEARD
(To the DISTINGUISHED LOOKING MAN)
Are you the governor?

GOVERNOR
I am.

BLACKBEARD
I hope you brought the proclamation.
(He holds out his hand -- the GOVERNOR steps forward, hands a large sheet of paper as we

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD'S 'wanted' poster -- it has the words 100 pounds prominently printed and a not inaccurate drawing of BLACKBEARD. BLACKBEARD AND BONNET study the poster.

BLACKBEARD
(To BONNET)
Did they have to make me look like that?

BONNET
(To BLACKBEARD)
You do look like that.

BLACKBEARD
(Sighs, prods the ROWER with his sword)
Explain briefly why we are gathered together.

ROWER
(Scared)
-- he -- he's got us all -- we're his prisoners and he'll kill us all if he's not back by dusk with money.

HOUSE OWNER
How much money?

ROWER
-- ten -- ten thousand pounds --
(And on that --

CUT TO

THE VIRGINIANS and they are hysterical at the demand.

HOUSE OWNER'S WIFE
(Over the noise -- a step toward BLACKBEARD)
Crime will never pay --

BLACKBEARD
-- dear lady, if it didn't pay, it wouldn't exist --

HOUSE OWNER
-- you actually expect us to give you ten thousand pounds? --
(Before BLACKBEARD can answer --

CUT TO

BONNET, gracefully pouring tea.

BONNET
(Quietly)
That's apiece, you understand.
(And on that --

CUT TO

THE VIRGINIANS AND NOW THEY'RE REALLY HYSTERICAL and one woman cries out and another faints and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, stunned, whirling on BONNET --

BLACKBEARD
What are you trying to do?

BONNET
Just shut up and drink your tea -- my wife came from this area, I know these men, they can afford it. They'll scream, but they'll pay.
(To the ROWER, calmly)
Go -- join them.

CUT TO

THE ROWER, and he hesitates, not sure BONNET means it. Then he suddenly races free, bolting to the other VIRGINIANS and BLACKBEARD AND BONNET are without protection. For a moment, nobody knows quite what to do until a WEALTHY LOOKING MAN, standing by the GOVERNOR slowly raises his rifle, takes aim and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, sipping their tea.

BONNET
One trigger squeeze, you horses ass, and they all die.
(To BLACKBEARD)
More sugar?

CUT TO

THE VIRGINIANS, looking at BLACKBEARD AND BONNET. BLACKBEARD holds up his wanted poster --

BLACKBEARD
If you kill me, you get a hundred pounds --
(Points to the poster)
-- it says so right here.

The tension builds on now as another WEALTHY LOOKING MAN brings his gun into firing position and then the GOVERNOR breaks the silence.

GOVERNOR
Put your guns down...we'll pay...

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET; BLACKBEARD sips his tea.

BLACKBEARD
What would I be without you?

BONNET
Poor.
(As they put their cups down --

CUT TO

THE FRONT OF THE MANSION: horses, carriages, servants, etc. BLACKBEARD AND BONNET are on the front porch.

BLACKBEARD
Hurry along everybody, and bring your wealth to the nearest local -- I crave calves-head soup for lucnh.
(As he starts down the stairs --

CUT TO

A RUTTED ROAD LEADING TO A TAVERN. A NUMBER OF FARMERS, all with guns, stand on the side of the road watching a procession approach.

CUT TO

THE PROCESSION. IT'S BLACKBEARD AND BONNET surrounded by a DOZEN armed VIRGINIA GENTLEMEN who are serving as protection. BLACKBEARD holds his poster up high, and is talking to the farmers as he moves along.

BLACKBEARD
Isn't anybody going to kill me? --
(To FARMERS)
-- a hundred pounds, man, do it --

THE GOVERNOR
(For he leads the procession)
-- everybody stay calm -- he'll be gone soon --

BLACKBEARD
(He's really enjoying himself)
You won't have a chance to kill me tomorrow --
(Waving his wanted poster)
-- it's really me --
(Shakes his head)
-- I am deeply disappointed in the clear lack of manhood shown here --
(And suddenly --

CUT TO

A YOUNG FARMER, and he fast brings his rifle up, fires and as the sound explodes --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD pitching forward as if clubbed, lying still, face down in the road and BONNET, distraught, drops beside him as THE GOVERNOR starts screaming --

GOVERNOR
-- you fool, you goddam fool, you've killed him --

BLACKBEARD
(Lying on the ground, cheery and unharmed)
He's not a fool, just a poor shot --
(Jumping to his feet)
-- and even a champion shot couldn't kill me today --

BONNET
Why today more than usual?

BLACKBEARD
Look around, Stede -- my enemies bring me gold, my foes don't dare to kill me --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. CLOSE UP.

BLACKBEARD
-- I've been a giant and a legend for a long time, but I've never been immortal before...
(Now, from this --

CUT TO

A LARGE TABLE FILLED WITH VALUABLES.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

THE LOCAL TAVERN, filled with many of the wealthy Virginians we saw before in the house. BLACKBEARD stands by the table, drinking a glass of flip (mentioned only because it was drunk out of three-quart glasses) while BONNET expertly goes over the merchandise.

BONNET
(Looks at gem)
Good quality --
(Puts it in a large sack; takes another stone)
- no, I'm sorry, that won't do --
(Hands it back to owner, picks up third stone)

BONNET (CONT)
-- oh, that's a real heirloom, say 'thank you,' Blackbeard --

BLACKBEARD
Thank you.

VOICE (OVER)
Stede --
(BONNET, concentrating, doesn't hear)
-- owner of my heart --
(And on that --

CUT TO

BONNET'S WIFE, standing in the doorway, looking, if anytinng, more adorable than before. As she rushes forward --

CUT TO

BONNET, stupefied, as she flies into his arms.

MRS. BONNET
Your touch still sets me afire.

BONNET
I think you have me confused, madam.

MRS. BONNET
See how I tremble when you touch me?

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, watching, intrigued.

BLACKBEARD
What happens when she's <u>really</u> insulting?

BONNET
She's delirious --

MRS. BONNET
-- yes, with joy and passion that we are together again, for eternity.

BONNET
Susan, I left Barbados so that I might pass eternity with others.

MRS. BONNET
I couldn't stay -- people were laughing at you and ignoring me -- I had to come home to Mummy --

BONNET
Please release me --

MRS. BONNET
-- touch my breasts --

BONNET
-- madam, it's been so long I wouldn't know where to begin to find them.

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET, placing his hands on her breasts.

MRS. BONNET
They are here!

CUT TO

BONNET, standing there with his hands on his wife's boobs. The entire room is silent now, watching him.

BLACKBEARD
Finish the counting, Stede, I'll take over what you're doing --
(And as he reaches for MRS. BONNET'S bosom --)

MRS. BONNET
Is this the Blackbeard who works for you? --
(BLACKBEARD doesn't like the phrasing much, a fact BONNET notices --)

BONNET
He allows me, occasionally, to work <u>with</u> him --

MRS. BONNET
Not a day passes without rumours of a new exploit -- you are so famous now --

CUT TO

MRS. BONNET, as BONNET jerks her away, so they have at least a bit of privacy, and the words pour out --

BONNET
-- yes, and you like that, the fame, just as once you rather enjoyed the money. Oh, I suspected that was my attraction but you were such a glory I endured your scorn --

CUT TO

BONNET, on a note of triumph.

BONNET
-- but I no longer find scorn nourishing, Susan -- never -- no more --
(Beat)
-- I walk with titans now...
(From his bright-eyed face --

CUT TO

THE VIRGINIA CAPTIVES, crammed in a rowboat, heading toward the distant shore.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET back on BLACKBEARD'S ship. They lean on the rail, as BLACKBEARD calls out to people in the rowboat.

BLACKBEARD
Have a good dinner now.
(Final wave)
No hurry; they're expecting you.

BONNET
(Both he and BLACKBEARD are in wonderful moods)
I note you haven't told the crew about the extra valuables you collected.

BLACKBEARD
I thought I'd surprise them later.

BONNET
(Smiling)
Ten or twenty years later?

BLACKBEARD
(Nods, smiles back)
Mindreader...
(Now, from them --

CUT TO

A LOVELY LITTLE SPIT OF LAND. Late afternoon. The sun on the water makes it all seem enchanted.

CUT TO

THE SHIP. Lovely and quiet. MR. WALPOLE sits on a deck rail, staring out, chatting with ISRAEL. It's a peaceful time.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, idly drinking, looking out at the sand spit from the quarterdeck. BLACKBEARD gestures toward the sand.

BLACKBEARD
Pretty little spot.

BONNET
Beautiful.

BLACKBEARD
I'm glad you like it.

BONNET
Why?

BLACKBEARD
(Idly)
Because you're dying there tonight --
(And quickly --

CUT TO

BONNET. CLOSE UP. Half smile, not sure he heard, his

head is half tilted. There is a pause. The smile drains pale as we

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BLACKBEARD, a pistol in his hands, pointed at BONNET'S head.

BLACKBEARD
I'm marooning you now -- by midnight, it's under-water --
(BONNET can't say anything; he just stares)
-- you must have known this was coming, you're the mind-reader --
(Gestures with his pistol)
-- hurry along now, take off your clothes -- and don't look so surprised -- I told you I'd more than likely double-cross you --

BONNET
-- I'll never tell about the extra valuables -- you don't have to worry --

BLACKBEARD
-- take them off now --

BONNET
-- don't humiliate me -- it's not the dying I care about, but don't make me out a fool -- kill me in combat, let me have that much please --

BLACKBEARD
-- very well, I won't humiliate you; you may leave on your underwear --

BONNET
(Building)
-- Christ man -- why? --

BLACKBEARD
-- don't go to pieces over it,

BLACKBEARD (CONT)
it won't be that bad, you'll have Walpole for company --
(On the name --

CUT TO

BONNET, whirling, screaming --

BONNET
Mr. Walpole -- save yourself --

CUT TO

WALPOLE, squinting into the sun, seated on the rail --

CUT TO

BONNET, at the top of his lungs --

BONNET
-- you know how to swim --
JUMP!!!

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, as several of the pirates grab for him, he pushes them off, rolls backward over the railing and

CUT TO

THE WATER as MR. WALPOLE falls through the sunlight, body twisting and turning and it's a long way but finally he hits with a tremendous splash and sinks stunned and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, the pistol on BONNET still. ISRAEL calls out --

ISRAEL
Should I lower a boat, Captain?
(BLACKBEARD glances toward the water and

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, slowly swimming away from the boat. He's not very graceful in the water. A wave hits him, he coughs, sinks down, struggles up again, tries to keep going --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, back to ISRAEL.

BLACKBEARD
It's five miles to shore, Israel; why deprive the sharks?

CUT TO

BONNET, watching as MR. WALPOLE sinks again, rises, keeps on. For a moment, BONNET looks as if he's going to come apart at the seams. With all the effort he has left, he grabs control, turns, stares at BLACKBEARD.

BONNET
All right, you son of a bitch, let's get on with it.

CUT TO

THE SAND SPIT, a little later. It's already getting a trifle smaller. It's darker now.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

STEDE BONNET on the sand spit in his underwear as BLACKBEARD rows back to the ship.

BONNET
You've still never answered 'why'?

BLACKBEARD
There is no 'why'. If I don't commit an atrocity every so often, the crew begins to lose faith in me.

CUT TO

BONNET on the sand spit in his underwear. A wind ripples the water. He shivers in spite of himself.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, calling out as he rows away.

BLACKBEARD
I've told you and told you

BLACKBEARD (CONT)
what a dreadful creature I am --
(Beat)
-- perhaps now you'll begin to believe me...
(And as he moves away --

CUT TO

THE MOON. Full. It's the middle of the night.

CUT TO

THE WATER. Rough. The wind howls. It's scary --

CUT TO

A SHARK FIN knifing through the chill water, circling, circling, as we

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BONNET, standing alone on what's left of the sand spit -- all of maybe one square foot. He's freezing cold.

CUT TO

THE SHARK FIN.

CUT TO

BONNET, watching it, transfixed.

CUT TO

A WAVE, rolling along the shallow water of the sand spit, slowly eating away at the last of BONNET'S protection.

CUT TO

BONNET IN HIS UNDERWEAR. The wind is worse now. He moves one foot on top of the other so he's practically standing one legged and

CUT TO

THE SHARK FIN, circling closer and

CUT TO

BONNET, and he cannot stop watching it, cannot tear his eyes away.

CUT TO

A SECOND SHARK FIN moving alongside the first, and now the two beasts circle closer, always closer and

CUT TO

ANOTHER WAVE, and the water is reaching BONNET'S foot now and

CUT TO

THE SHARK FINS and

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, rowing slowly into view.

MR. WALPOLE
I meant to get here sooner, sir, but it's been a rather exhausting day and I'm not young anymore.

CUT TO

BONNET, blinking back tears.

BONNET
Under the circumstances, I'll consider excusing you.

MR. WALPOLE
I was hoping you would.

BONNET
I have been standing here thinking of Julius Caesar. Did you know he was also humiliated by pirates?

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, rowing very close now.

BONNET
He eventually killed his captors.

MR. WALPOLE
Very biblical.

CUT TO

BONNET, going to the rowboat, climbing quickly in, taking the oars, beginning to row fast.

MR. WALPOLE
Are we in a hurry?

BONNET
(Nods)
I must find my ship, then I must find my enemy.

MR. WALPOLE
And then?

CUT TO

BONNET. CLOSE UP. Staring dead on.

BONNET
...revenge is good for the soul...
(HOLD ON BONNET IN THE DARKNESS. Then --

CUT TO

GLASSEYE IN BRIGHT SUNLIGHT.

GLASSEYE
(Quietly)
Take a look for yourself, sir.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BONNET back on the deck of his pirate ship. It's morning. BONNET is dressed differently from any other time we've seen him -- nothing remotely fancy left. He looks like a working pirate now. MR. WALPOLE stands alongside, watching as GLASSEYE hands a telescope to BONNET. As BONNET looks through --

CUT TO

A SHIP IN THE DISTANCE, its sails no more than half way rigged.

CUT TO

BONNET, studying through the telescope a moment more.

GLASSEYE
Isn't that him, Captain?
(BONNET says
nothing, only
nods, as we

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD on his ship. It's early morning, he is bare-chested and having his rum for breakfast. Above him, men are working in the rigging, getting the Adventure ready to leave.

BLACKBEARD has spent the night near the mouth of Cape Fear. He is close to shore, and as he looks around, we can see the area is dotted with small, heavily foliaged islands, none of them inhabited. There are many mosquitoes and other insects, but they were part of the life then, as we've seen, and except for an occasional slap, nobody minds them all that much.

ISRAEL
(Moving to
BLACKBEARD)
Shall we hurry along then?

BLACKBEARD
May as well, may as well.
(Now suddenly
he stops,
squints --

CUT TO

A DISTANT ISLAND. Hard to make out much of anything.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. He takes another swallow, goes to the tiller area, gets his long telescope, brings it to his eye and

CUT TO

THE DISTANT ISLAND. It all looks perfectly fine, except that after a minute, you can spot the steady forward movement of BONNET'S main mast.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, looking at ISRAEL.

BLACKBEARD
Most odd. That island is.

BLACKBEARD (CONT)
possessed of a movable tree.
(Now as ISRAEL
stares --

CUT TO

BONNET as silently, the Revenge sails clear of the island into view

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD using his telescope again.

BLACKBEARD
Good news, Israel -- it's Bonnet; I always liked him.

CUT TO

BONNET -- he's a long way away but he turns to GLASSEYE at the tiller.

BONNET
Fire cannons.

GLASSEYE
From here?

BONNET
Just to let him know we mean business --

CUT TO

BONNET'S CANNONS, letting go with a wild blast and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, as the noise reaches him --

BLACKBEARD
Isn't that a beautiful sound --

ISRAEL
-- shall we fight him here?

BLACKBEARD
Christ, no, man, I haven't room to maneuver --
(He points to the
river mouth)

BLACKBEARD (CONT)
-- can you reach open sea?
(ISRAEL nods)
I'll kill him there.
(Roaring to his men)
-- move -- move -- move --
(Taking a long drink of rum --)
A battle to the death -- who could ask a better way to start the morning --
(Now from BLACKBEARD

CUT TO

BONNET, and his ship is moving like a bitch, full sail, closing the distance but still probably a mile away and

CUT TO

ISRAEL at the tiller, glancing back at BONNET'S ship.

ISRAEL
Captain --
(BLACKBEARD runs over)
-- they're coming like the goddam wind -- I'm not sure I can reach open sea --

BLACKBEARD
(Calling out an order)
Bring me a cohorn --
(Back to ISRAEL)
-- I'll slow him down -- but you must reach the sea --
(ISRAEL concentrates on the tiller as we

CUT TO

BONNET, and The Revenge is flying.

BONNET
More sail -- everything --
(And as he turns to the front of the ship --

CUT TO

HALF A DOZEN PIRATES, attaching a flying jib and as it billows out --

CUT TO

THE REVENGE, and it goes even faster now and

CUT TO

BONNET AND MR. WALPOLE, wild with excitement, BLACKBEARD is only three quarters of a mile away now. And The Revenge is gaining rapidly as we

CUT TO

SOMETHING WE HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE. It's a large pile of pieces of scrap metal, sharp and jagged. And next to it is another pile of grape shot -- iron balls the size of walnuts. And a third pile -- this is of metal pieces connected by a small metal bar -- miniature bar bells they look like. And

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

HALF A DOZEN OF BLACKBEARD'S PIRATES, feverishly stuffing these items into metal cannisters -- cylinder shaped cannisters -- and once the cannisters are closed, dropping them into an enormous bag of sailing cloth.

BLACKBEARD hurries up, grabs the cloth bag, slings it over his shoulder, and looks around.

BLACKBEARD
Bring me the damn cohorn --
(And on that word --

CUT TO

TWO LARGE PIRATES, struggling with a cohorn -- it was a wide mouthed very short cannon screwed into a wooden base and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, going to the two men, grabbing the cohorn all by himself, lifting it by one of its handles, and then, the bag of cannister shells over his shoulder, the cohorn in one hand, he begins to climb the rigging of his ship.

CUT TO

BONNET, closer, grabbing his telescope, looking across and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, in the telescope, carrying his incredibly heavy burden as if it didn't exist, and scrambling higher and higher into the rigging and

CUT TO

BONNET, putting his telescope down. For this first time this morning, he looks worried as we

CUT TO

ISRAEL, at the tiller, glancing over his shoulder and up and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, and for all this size and power he could move, and he's going like a mad bastard, higher and higher, fifty feet, sixty feet, seventy five and

CUT TO

THE REVENGE, no more than half a mile away and

CUT TO

ISRAEL, staring at the river mouth and the open sea beyond but who knows if he's going to make it and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, and at last he's there -- all the way to the fighting top. This was a platform with a railing placed at the junction of the main and topmasts -- over a hundred feet up in the air and

CUT TO

THE FIGHTING TOP as BLACKBEARD heaves the cloth bag of cannisters over the railing onto the platform. Then he climbs over, puts the cohorn down, looks out at his pursuer and

CUT TO

BONNET, not more than a quarter mile away and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, feverish in the fighting top, ripping the bag open, setting up the cohorn and

CUT TO

BONNET, calling out to his men.

BONNET
Prepare to fire.

CUT TO

THE CANNON CREWS. Three hundred yards from the Adventure now, and closing and

CUT TO

ISRAEL at the Adventure's tiller, and it's obvious he's never going to make it to open sea and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD IN THE FIGHTING TOP, kicking the cohorn, cursing it, making it obey him and

CUT TO

BONNET, belting it out --

BONNET
Open -- fire -- now!
(And as his cannons
start to boom --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, carefully aiming his cohorn, firing a cannister shell and then --

CUT TO

THE MAIN SKYSAIL OF BONNET'S ship as BLACKBEARD'S sharp metal pieces rip through the canvas, shredding it in a dozen different places, and as the sail flaps uselessly --

CUT TO

BONNET, startled, staring up and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, firing again, and

CUT TO

THIS TIME THE MAINSAIL OF BONNET'S SHIP as BLACKBEARD strikes again, the huge sail ripped to pieces, and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, roaring from his 100 foot high perch and

CUT TO

THE REVENGE and there's no question about it, it's not going as fast as it was and

CUT TO

ISRAEL at the tiller, and ahead now is open sea and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD firing again and now

CUT TO

BONNET'S fore sail, ripped to shreds and

CUT TO

THE ADVENTURE, holding its own against the Revenge now, then slowly, starting to widen the gap and pull away and

CUT TO

BONNET, distraught as he realizes what's happening and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, triumphant as he realizes what's happening and

CUT TO

SOMETHING NOBODY EVER SAW BEFORE as holy shit, The Adventure roars right into an unseen sandbar and immediately starts to tilt the hell over and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, grabbing for the rail of the fighting top as the ship continues to keel over and he's hanging in space for life and

CUT TO

THE DECK OF THE ADVENTURE and it's madness, the thing tilting over and everything flying ass over teacups, people grabbing onto anything they can for support and

CUT TO

BONNET, and he's got them now, he's won and he knows it and --

BONNET
-- faster -- faster and keep firing --

MR. WALPOLE
-- pardon, sir, but I was rather wondering if --

BONNET
-- not now, Mr. Walpole --
(And on that --

CUT TO

Holy shit, the Revenge flies dead into another sandbar and

CUT TO

THE DECK OF THE REVENGE, as it starts to topple over too, everything flying all the hell over, people screaming and grabbing and

CUT TO

BONNET AND WALPOLE, hanging to the tiller for their lives and you never heard such noise and shouting and

CUT TO

THE REVENGE, tilting over more, more and

CUT TO

THE ADVENTURE, tilting more, but more slowly now and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, panting, crawling back over the rail of the fighting top which isn't a hundred feet high anymore -- it's straight out over the water and maybe thirty feet up.

CUT TO

THE REVENGE as it too slows its tilting and finally comes to a halt.

CUT TO

BONNET AND MR. WALPOLE.

BONNET
What was it you wanted to say?

MR. WALPOLE
I was only wondering, sir, that since they hit a sandbar if there wasn't a chance of our doing the same.

BONNET
(Getting to his feet)
The answer to your question is a definite yes.
(Now, as he looks around --

CUT TO

A LONG SHOT OF THE SITUATION AND IT'S THIS: the two ships are tilted on different sandbars in different directions, perhaps 250 yards away from each other. Both have been damaged, but both are still seaworthy. If they were upright, that is.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, scrambling along the rigging back down toward the deck. Although strictly speaking, he's not going 'down', but almost parallel with the water. The deck is at more than a 45 degree angle with the water. Things aboardship are not, at the moment, tidy.

CUT TO

ISRAEL, who is clinging to the rail, checking things out as BLACKBEARD makes his way to him.

BLACKBEARD
(Surveying the situation)
Well, it's not everything one could wish for, is it?

ISRAEL
I'm confused -- I've never been in a battle like this.

BLACKBEARD
I doubt they're exactly common, Israel, but it's simple enough to predict.
(Looks out at THE REVENGE)
How long til rising tide?

ISRAEL
Three hours at a guess.

BLACKBEARD
That gives us three hours to prepare for battle -- whichever ship the tide lifts first, wins.
(Beat)
And from the looks of things, it's going to be us.
(From them --

CUT TO

BONNET, WALPOLE AND GLASSEYE.

GLASSEYE
I think we're stuck more deeply, sir.
(BONNET nods; GLASSEYE is nervous)

MR. WALPOLE
(Calm as always)
Never fear, the Captain will conceive of something brilliant.

BONNET
Why do you think that?

MR. WALPOLE
Well you never have yet, sir, so I think that puts the odds distinctly in your favor...

CUT TO

THE SHOT OF THE TWO TILTED SHIPS. Nothing has changed. The sun is simply higher in the sky.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, carrying an armload of cannonballs, making his precarious way along the tilted deck, setting them down near one of his main cannons and

CUT TO

BONNET, sitting, thinking, staring, not doing a goddam thing at all and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, supervising the gathering of dozens of large tubs of water, the same kind we saw used earlier to soak blankets in to prevent fire --

CUT TO

BONNET, frustrated, lost, staring around and

CUT TO

THE SUN, higher and

CUT TO

THE HULL OF BLACKBEARD'S SHIP, stuck on the sandbar and

CUT TO

BONNET'S HULL, also stuck, but worse and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD overseeing the greasing of his cannons. The barrels are being cleaned and

CUT TO

BONNET. CLOSE UP. TRIUMPHANT -- and he's got it!

BONNET
(Whirling on WALPOLE)
We must lighten the ship! --
(WALPOLE looks at him)
-- everything, everything -- overboard.
(And on that last word --

CUT TO

BONNET, throwing a barrel of food over the side of his ship and as it drifts away

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BONNET'S CREW, carrying whatever they can, food, blankets, buckets -- everything but ammunition of course -- and pitching it into the water and

CUT TO

THE WATER by BONNET'S boat and it's starting to get crowded as things float away and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, watching as his men make grenades and stinkpots and

CUT TO

BONNET'S BOAT and clothes fly overboard and tables and chairs and rope and benches and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, peering over at his hull, still stuck in sand. But maybe not quite so much -- he seems kind of pleased.

CUT TO

BONNET, peering over his hull, still stuck in sand. And nothing has changed. He is distraught as we

CUT TO

THE WATER BEHIND BONNET'S BOAT and the whole river is filling with debris now, as everything that wasn't nailed down is pitched and as the men continue to work

CUT TO

THE SUN IN THE SKY AND THE TWO BOATS. And the tide is now starting to rise as we

CUT TO

A SHOCK -- IT'S BLACKBEARD BUT HE'S LOOKING LIKE HE DID WHEN WE FIRST SAW HIM. He's in his cabin, his beard has been braided and ribboned. His giant sword is in place. He's dressed all in black. He is putting on his sash of pistols and

CUT TO

BONNET, getting desperate now, as his men still throw things overboard, but nothing seems quite to work and

CUT TO

ISRAEL, directing BLACKBEARD'S crew as they wet everything down before battle, the sails, the ropes, dozens of blankets are placed into the giant water buckets and

CUT TO

THE TIDE, rising a little bit more and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD'S CREW, tense but somehow confident and

CUT TO

BONNET'S CREW, and they're only tense and

CUT TO

BONNET, suddenly calling out --

BONNET
Glasseye --
(GLASSEYE turns)
-- I must have your cutlass --

GLASSEYE
-- what's wrong with your weapon? --

BONNET
-- my rapier is for fencing not cutting, now <u>give it to me</u>, <u>man</u> --
(As GLASSEYE hands it over --

CUT TO

BONNET, moving up the deck toward one of his cannons, and these were, of course, because of their recoil, attached to the rails by thick ropes and now BONNET begins wildly hacking at those restraining ropes and

CUT TO

GLASSEYE, stunned at the action and

CUT TO

BONNET, hacking wildly and as the last rope gives --

CUT TO

THE GIANT CANNON, loose, beginning to slide all the way across and down the deck and it makes a hell of a noise and goes faster and faster and

CUT TO

THE FAR RAIL AS THE CANNON blasts into it and

CUT TO

THE WATER AS THE CANNON BREAKS THROUGH THE RAIL, SHATTERS IT AND FALLS INTO THE WATER WITH A TITANIC SPLASH and

CUT TO

BONNET'S SHIP as slowly, almost imperceptibly, it begins to straighten and

CUT TO

THE TIDE, coming in more strongly now and

CUT TO

BONNET hacking another giant cannon free and

CUT TO

THE CANNON, rolling faster and faster across the deck of the ship, blasting through the rail into the water and

CUT TO

ANOTHER CANNON rolling thunderously down and

CUT TO

BONNET'S SHIP, straighter now and

CUT TO

THE TIDE, coming in more fully and

CUT TO

BONNET hacking and

CUT TO

GLASSEYE making his way in the direction of the tiller and

CUT TO

ANOTHER CANNON, splashing into the water and

CUT TO

BONNET IN A FRENZY, attacking the final cannon and as it starts to roll --

CUT TO

THE TIDE, coming in strongly and

CUT TO

THE LAST CANNON CRASHING THROUGH THE RAILS and

CUT TO

THE REVENGE as at last it slowly leaves the sandbar, starts to sail free and

CUT TO

BONNET AND MR. WALPOLE --

BONNET
I would have liked a little more enthusiasm from the crew --

MR. WALPOLE
I think they're perturbed about fighting a sea battle without weapons, sir --

BONNET
(Huge -- slapping the ship itself)
Man -- this is our weapon --
(And now --

CUT TO

THE LONG SHOT OF THE TWO SHIPS as The Revenge begins to move -- ripped sails and all -- toward The Adventure, which is still not free of the sandbar --

CUT TO

GLASSEYE at the tiller, going faster, because enough of his sails are undamaged to give him good speed, and

CUT TO

BONNET, in wild excitement until suddenly we

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, in his monstrous get up, standing in full view, sword pointed dead at The Revenge and BONNET.

CUT TO

BONNET staring at BLACKBEARD. He's never seen him like this before. He hesitates, then turns to MR. WALPOLE.

BONNET
(Almost stammering now)
Try -- do whatever you can to survive this because -- you see, I've taken quite good care of you in my will. You'll be rich when I'm dead, Mr. Walpole and...
(Voice trails off)
...just try and survive, that's all.

MR. WALPOLE
Major -- we're winning so far --

BONNET
I have no chance against a God, Mr. Walpole --
(And on that --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. CLOSE UP AND ROARING. IMPREGNABLE.

CUT TO

BONNET. A beat.

BONNET
However, I shall do my very best to make him admit I was a man, before I fall.
(He turns to the tiller)
Glasseye?

GLASSEYE
Yes, Captain Bonnet.

CUT TO

BONNET. CLOSE UP.

BONNET
Ram the bastard!

CUT TO

THE REVENGE SLOWLY TURNING, heading straight toward the unprotected hull of The Adventure and

CUT TO

THE CREW OF THE ADVENTURE as they start to retreat away from what's going to be the point of impact and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. Amazed, as he realizes BONNET'S maneuver --

BLACKBEARD
(Applauding)
Good thinking, good thinking --
(And now --

CUT TO

THE ADVENTURE, still not free, but not as stuck as it once was and

CUT TO

THE REVENGE, sailing full out and

CUT TO

THE ADVENTURE, a sitting duck and

CUT TO

BONNET'S CREW, crouched and ready with their cutlasses and pikes and grappling hooks and knives and pistols and

CUT TO

THE LOUDEST GODDAM SOUND YOU EVER HEARD as The Revenge ploughs full speed into The Adventure. Everything flies every which way, there are screams and curses and bodies falling and

CUT TO

BONNET'S CREW, getting itself together, bunching to board The Adventure and suddenly, the half dozen men in front stop as a jar is thrown in front of them and then these guys are gagging and holding their noses and as smoke from the jar spreads --

ONE OF THE PIRATES
(Retreating momentarily)
Stinkpots!

CUT TO

ANOTHER STINKPOT flying through the air, and as it lands --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, back up in the rigging of his ship, out over the area where BONNET'S men are coming from, and he has a bunch of stinkpots in his arms -- (stinkpots, by the way were a terrible concoction of saltpeter, sulphur, smelly gum resin plus decayed fish, all crammed into earthen jars with a wick sticking out. When they landed, the effect was so unsettling it could upset entire shiploads) -- now he lights another wick, lobs it through the air and

CUT TO

BONNET'S MEN, retreating further as the smoke and the odor become impossible until we

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, holding his nose, running forward --

MR. WALPOLE
(His greatest moment)
Chharrrrrge --
(And as he leads the crew forward --

CUT TO

THE ADVENTURE as BONNET'S CREW clambers aboard and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, far out on the rigging, turning, drawing his giant sword as we

CUT TO

THE OTHER END OF THE RIGGING AS BONNET, slender rapier in hand, clambers on and

CUT TO

THE TWO OF THEM starting toward each other. It's not easy going, because what they're moving across is the mast and sails which are now more or less parallel with the water instead of their more usual up and down position. So it's not like they're moving along a carpet or living room floor and

CUT TO

BELOW THEM, as ISRAEL and MR. WALPOLE, both with swords, see

each other, close with each other as the battle rages all around and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET getting pretty close now as BLACKBEARD suddenly takes out a pistol, fires at BONNET'S head, misses, curses, throws the goddam thing and

CUT TO

BONNET AS THE PISTOL creams him in the head, knocks him to his knees, stuns him, and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, starting to move in closer, surprisingly losing his balance, slipping down as we

CUT TO

THE WATER AND THE REASON BLACKBEARD lost his balance -- his ship is coming at last free of the sandbar and as that happens --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD'S SHIP as slowly, then faster and faster, like a cork released in a bathtub, it begins to right itself, the entire huge mast area going from a horizontal to a vertical position and

CUT TO

THE MAIN MAST, rising back into the air and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, as their once level field of battle isn't level anymore and as the mast rises, it carries them both along, higher and higher and

CUT TO

BONNET, desperately grabbing for a rope, holding tight, still somewhat dazed from the pistol blow in the head and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, holding onto a rope for dear life as he keeps rising along with the mast and

CUT TO

THE MAIN DECK, and everybody is slipping and sliding around as the ship gets back toward a level keel and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, moving hand over hand toward BONNET and

CUT TO

BONNET, getting the hell down from the sail area as fast as he can as BLACKBEARD comes closer and

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE AND ISRAEL, and MR. WALPOLE is old and strong but not much of a fencer, and ISRAEL is a much better navigator than anything else but they swing away and as ISRAEL swings with his sword

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE, wounded in the arm, blood coming out --

MR. WALPOLE
(Genuinely surprised)
That really really hurts --
(And he swings out
strongly as we

CUT TO

ISRAEL, and he's starting to bleed now too as MR. WALPOLE'S blow broke through his defense and

CUT TO

BONNET, at last making it back to the deck ahead of BLACKBEARD who drops nearby, charges, swinging his ten pound cutlass and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, missing as the blow sails over BONNET who ducks it, but then BONNET rises and BLACKBEARD catches him brutally on the side of the neck with the thick side of his sword and BONNET staggers back, blinking and dazed and

CUT TO

BONNET, retreating quickly, trying to regain his senses and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, advancing, swinging in great deadly arcs and

CUT TO

BONNET, moving toward the quarterdeck stairs, suddenly rushing up them and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, charging after him but

CUT TO

BONNET, attacking down at BLACKBEARD on the stairs, getting through his defences slightly, ripping his shirt, forcing BLACKBEARD momentarily to retreat and

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE AND ISRAEL, both of them bleeding worse now than before, as they slash at each other --

ISRAEL
-- Herman --

MR. WALPOLE
-- what, Israel? --

ISRAEL
-- I thought we were friends --

MR. WALPOLE
-- true enough --

ISRAEL
-- then why in hell are we killing each other --

MR. WALPOLE
(Slows)
-- I don't suppose there's a truly logical reason --

ISRAEL
-- I'll quit if you will --

MR. WALPOLE
-- done --
(And as he hesitates --

CUT TO

ISRAEL, putting two fingers into his mouth, giving a genuinely phenomenal whistle --

ISRAEL
-- hey -- listen -- we're all in the same business --

CUT TO

THE PIRATES AROUND ISRAEL, paying attention --

ISRAEL
-- put up your swords, it's their game, let them finish it themselves --
(And as he points --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET fighting brilliantly on the quarter-deck, BLACKBEARD always attacking, BONNET continually in retreat and

CUT TO

THE OTHER PIRATES, as gradually, with relief, they stop their swordplay and turn their attention toward the quarter-deck and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, as his sword slashes into BONNET'S left shoulder, BONNET'S blood begins to flow and we

CUT TO

BONNET who shouldn't be smiling but he is, bleeding, retreating, avoiding the swings from the giant cutlass and

BONNET
(Excited)
-- omigod --

BLACKBEARD
-- what? --

BONNET
-- I just realized something --

BLACKBEARD
-- tell me --

BONNET
-- I'm going to win --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, slashing at BONNET'S side, a glancing blow, but still it brings more blood --

BLACKBEARD
You're certainly doing wonderfully so far --

CUT TO

BONNET, retreating as BLACKBEARD swings his giant sword.

BLACKBEARD
I'm sorry about that marooning business.

BONNET
I'm sorry for calling you a son of a bitch.

BLACKBEARD
It's all right, I was murdering you at the time.

CUT TO

THE PIRATES, watching, interested, like spectators at a tennis match and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, launching his wildest assault yet, but BONNET avoids it, retreating --

BLACKBEARD
Stand the hell still --

BONNET
-- never, that's why I'm winning -- what does your cutlass weigh, ten pounds? Too heavy for prolonged action. Whereas my rapier gets better as you go along.
(And he suddenly makes a dazzling thrust forward, pierces BLACKBEARD'S arm --)

CUT TO

BONNET, as BLACKBEARD gives no indication of being wounded. His blows, however, are starting to slow now.

BONNET
Didn't you feel that?

BLACKBEARD
Feel what, feel what?

BONNET
I just stabbed you.

BLACKBEARD
I am immune, try again.
(BONNET stabs BLACKBEARD through the shoulder; BLACKBEARD doesn't react)
Whenever you're ready.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. Panting terribly, bleeding --

BLACKBEARD
What a thrilling battle, Bonnet -- who could ask for more?

CUT TO

THE PIRATE CREW, moving forward now, almost drawn as if by magnets, ISRAEL AND MR. WALPOLE in the lead and

CUT TO

BONNET, flashing in, landing, avoiding BLACKBEARD'S slow return swipe, then suddenly flashing in again, striking another time --

BLACKBEARD
Odd.

BONNET
What?

BLACKBEARD
I felt that one.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, starting another blow, then stopping in mid arc, a puzzled look on his face.

CUT TO

BONNET, watching.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, as the sword slips from his hand, clatters to the deck. He looks at it, hesitates, then suddenly his legs give completely away, his body twists, and he twists and falls like a rag doll.

CUT TO

BONNET, starting toward BLACKBEARD, hesitantly, making sure and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, lying there, and his eyes start to roll up into his head but with a great effort, he forces them to focus a final time. He says something but it's too low to be audible and

CUT TO

BONNET, dropping alongside the other man. BONNET is terribly upset; it's almost as if he'd lost.

BLACKBEARD
...Stede...

BONNET
Here.

BLACKBEARD
...it turns out I...wasn't immune after all...

BONNET
I won't tell anybody.

BLACKBEARD
...it's sort of nice...the way things worked out...I always hoped a friend would kill me...

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE AND ISRAEL, watching, silent, dazed.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET. BLACKBEARD is going fast; his voice is barely whispered now.

BLACKBEARD
...please...

BONNET
What?

BLACKBEARD
...let me die with my sword in my hand...
(As BONNET glances quickly around --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD'S GIANT SWORD, lying on the deck where it fell as BONNET reaches for it, lifts it, slowly and carefully places it in BLACKBEARD'S hand and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD, making one final slash, slicing BONNET in the shoulder and as BONNET starts to bleed

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET as BLACKBEARD lies back, eyes closing now, BONNET alongside.

BLACKBEARD
...did I kill you...?

BONNET
I don't think so.

BLACKBEARD
...damn...
(There is a pause)
...well, at least you'll have some scars to remember me by...

BONNET
There's a good chance I would have remembered you anyway.

BLACKBEARD
(Nods; then --)
...oh, oh, oh, what a dreadful creature I am...

CUT TO

THE TWO OF THEM, BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, IN CLOSE UP. HOLD AND KEEP HOLDING. From somewhere now, there is the sound of wind, of flapping canvas, of the sea...Then --

BLACKBEARD
Double damn.

BONNET
What is it this time?

BLACKBEARD
I'm starting to feel better.
(And as, slightly embarrassed, he pushes himself up to one elbow --

CUT TO

BONNET.

BONNET
Well, you've ruined it, that's all -- you'll never have a chance at a better death scene, I can promise you that --

BLACKBEARD
(Sitting now)
I know, I know --

CUT TO

MR. WALPOLE AND ISRAEL AND THE CREWS.

MR. WALPOLE
(To ISRAEL)
Very moving, didn't you think?

ISRAEL
(Nods)
Marvelous show of skill -- magnificent swordplay --
(And as the CREW begins to show its appreciation, suddenly --

CUT TO

THE LOUDEST GODDAM NOISE YOU EVER HEARD AS SIX ARMED SHIPS come sailing into view and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET, getting to their feet, staring off and --

BLACKBEARD
That must be every armed vessel in Virginia! --
(And now as he looks up --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD'S SHIP'S SAILS. Pretty badly torn.

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET.

BLACKBEARD
(Bawling out orders to the men)
Everyone to Bonnet's ship -- now --
(And as the CREW begins immediately to obey --

BONNET
(Urging them on)
-- faster -- faster -- everyone to my ship on the --
(He stops, turns to BLACKBEARD)
-- we may have something of a problem.

BLACKBEARD
Yes, yes?

BONNET
I got rid of all my cannons --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. CLOSE UP. FURIOUS. ROARING --

BLACKBEARD
-- you are a turd, I was right the first time I saw you --

CUT TO

BONNET. CLOSE UP. FURIOUS. ROARING RIGHT BACK.

BONNET
Shut your mouth or I'll kill you again --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET.

BLACKBEARD
(More quietly)
Well you needn't be so sensitive --
(To the CREW --
gesturing)
Back, back, we'll use this tub.

CUT TO

THE SIX SHIPS FROM VIRGINIA. They seem all powerful, and they are moving like hell and

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD AND BONNET. BLACKBEARD seems cheery.

BLACKBEARD
(Pointing to the tiller)
Israel -- open sea.
(As ISRAEL and MR. WALPOLE
run to the tiller --

CUT TO

BLACKBEARD. He takes his sword and his great jug of rum and begins climbing up into the rigging. He gestures for BONNET to do the same, which BONNET quickly does. BLACKBEARD suddenly breaks into song. The sound is just awful.

BONNET
(Climbing up alongside
BLACKBEARD now)
That may be the most hideous sound I ever heard.

BLACKBEARD
(Drinks)
It is dreadful; that's why I try to sing only at moments of great triumph.

BONNET
Triumph?

BLACKBEARD
(They are climbing higher
now, drinking as they go)
Of course -- we'll just get to open sea, outsail them, outfight them, and then head on to more and greater glories.

BONNET
You're sure we can't lose?

BLACKBEARD
I don't see how, since we're obviously immortal.

BONNET
(Thinks a moment, then nods)
I suppose that does give us an advantage.

CUT TO

THE TWO OF THEM, HAPPILY DRINKING, CLIMBING HIGHER INTO THE RIGGING. The sea surges, the sails billow gloriously -- it couldn't be a more beautiful day...

FINAL FADE OUT.